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NASSER

# THE PROBLEM FAMILY

by

**A. S. NEILL**

author of

THAT DREADFUL SCHOOL • THE PROBLEM CHILD

THE PROBLEM PARENT • THE PROBLEM TEACHER

"THERE can be no virtue where there is no freedom. It is not virtuous to respect one who is not respectable, not virtuous to live in legal sin with a man or woman you have ceased to love, not virtuous to love a God you really fear. Civilization is sick and unhappy—the root of it all is the family." A. S. Neill

# THE PROBLEM FAMILY



**A. S. NEILL**

*introduction by*

**GOODWIN WATSON**

*Teachers College, Columbia University*

Love-discipline, yes — hate-discipline, no. We must not impose our wills on children but should guide them by affection. To impose fear on a child is the unpardonable sin, states A. S. Neill.

Mr. Neill is the author of a great number of books including THE PROBLEM TEACHER, HEARTS NOT HEADS IN THE SCHOOL, THE PROBLEM CHILD, and THAT DREADFUL SCHOOL.

THE PROBLEM FAMILY is the book for which the author's countless followers have long waited. What he has to say he says in a sincere and forthright manner, and no one has a surer insight into the Child Mind than A. S. Neill, and no one holds more unconventional opinions.

In this provocative book he sets down the results of his long experience. This book is an earnest plea for freedom for children; it is a plea for a new conception of religion and morals. In short, it is the most practical book on the family ever published.

*(Continued on Back Flap)*

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JAN. 1955



## THE PROBLEM FAMILY



# THE PROBLEM FAMILY

*An Investigation of  
Human Relations*

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BY  
A. S. NEILL

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*Introduction by*  
GOODWIN WATSON  
*Teachers College, Columbia University*

HERMITAGE PRESS, INC.  
NEW YORK 21

No  
448.

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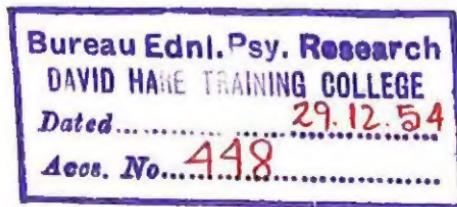
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First Printing

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To MY DAUGHTER  
ZOË SUTHERLAND NEILL



## INTRODUCTION

AFTER the First World War there sprang up in many parts of Western Europe and in America a variety of extraordinary experimental schools. Some practised "Back to Nature," others earnestly attempted social reform, but the largest number strove to foster individual self-expression. All of them were in rebellion against traditional authoritarian control and against the formal academic curriculum. In America, during two decades, from 1919-1939, the schools associated with the Progressive Education Association made similar contributions.

In 1947, a group of educators from the United States set out on a Studytour to discover what new educational experiments might be coming into life in the wake of the Second World War. We visited scores of schools in eight European countries. In no instance did we find new experimental schools like those of the 1920's. Rather the emphasis in this post-war epoch seems to be upon mass education for adolescents, but that story doesn't belong in an introduction to Neill's book.

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What does belong here is the fact that the one school which every member of our Studytour will remember, after he has forgotten all others, will be Summerhill.

At other schools we might nod approval or express polite criticism. But Summerhill immediately got under our skins. It stirred us up. Some of us were delighted and others were shocked. No one was indifferent.

When we traipsed onto the grounds, Neill was working, white-haired, sunburned, and shirtless, in the garden. The whole atmosphere was freer and more relaxed than we had ever felt it to be in any other school. We sat in on the regular Saturday evening session in which, town-meeting style, older pupils, younger pupils, and staff members worked out their problems of living together. Here was no playing at formal self-government; it was the real thing. Not everyone was interested; the girl behind me was surreptitiously studying Latin. One complaint which came in at the school meeting struck some of us odd. A group of pupils protested against having their arithmetic sessions cut short by the next group of students who insisted on coming in early. After the meeting came a party and dance. Some of the visitors who had been horrified by the lack of table manners among the younger children in the dining room were relieved to see the high plane of courtesy and consideration in the town-meeting and the social event.

Between sessions Neill gave us bits of his experience and his philosophy. It wasn't systematic. It was rambling and chatty—a style retained in this book. We disagreed at times—some of us very vigorously. Neill does us the honor of responding in this book to some of our criticisms.

Most of us however carried away from Summerhill a few fundamental impressions which I hope readers will take

## INTRODUCTION

away from this volume—however aghast or provoked they may be at some of Neill's unorthodoxies.

Here is an educator who is clearly on the side of children. He is whole-heartedly for the forces of life against all anti-life. He is devoutly for love and against hate; especially is he against hate hypocritically cloaked as virtue. For a full generation he has been successfully transforming "nasty, cheeky, hateful children" into "happy, social, sincere, and friendly children." He has demonstrated in practice that self-regulation can work in education. Some children will study math and physics although no one requires it. Freedom does not necessarily breed hooligans. I think it is noteworthy that while strict village schools report fist fights every few days, there has been only one instance of a bloody nose in twenty-seven years at Summerhill. It lends some support to Neill's theory that aggression is created by authoritarian discipline and that a generation raised in freedom is essential to world peace.

Neill respects the innate realism and good sense of children. He has found true what non-directive therapy teaches today—that youth under favorable circumstances can evolve its own purposes far better than purposes can be imposed. He would agree with Emerson that "the secret of education lies in respecting the pupil."

Without having read Dewey, Neill has observed directly in human nature and conduct much that Dewey incorporated into a democratic educational philosophy. Perhaps because he has not tried to formulate a philosophic system, Neill keeps closer to the emotions. *Hearts Not Heads in the School* he called an earlier book. Writing now on the family, Neill wisely gives primacy to the emotional quality of inter-personal relations. He wouldn't use those words,

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of course. He is too skillful a teacher to cumber his message with pedaguese.

Critics of Summerhill are often reassured by the successful, happy, creative and well-adjusted lives led by its graduates. Good results imply something sound in the methods and philosophy.

Perhaps I may offer a similar reassurance to the reader of this book on the family. I was privileged this past summer to live for a time with Mr. and Mrs. Neill and their lovely, healthy, active, self-regulating daughter Zoë. There seems to be something basically right about the way the Neill family theories work out in practice.

GOODWIN WATSON

*Teachers College, Columbia University*

January 4, 1949

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## THE PROBLEM FAMILY



## C H A P T E R I

### The Problem Family

MY BOOKS, *The Problem Child* (1926) and *The Problem Parent* (1932) are out of print, many copies having been destroyed in the warehouse during the blitz. My publishers, knowing that there is still a demand for the books, invited me to revise them and condense them into one volume. I sat down to read them, and realised with something akin to horror, that they were out-of-date. I do not mean that I have changed my opinion on child and adult psychology, but I do mean that my values regarding technique, symbolism, curative treatment, etc., have changed. Let me illustrate.

Twenty years ago a boy of thirteen in my school had a puppy.

"He loves animals," his mother had said when she sent the puppy as a birthday present. So John took his little Spot around with him, and it soon became clear that he was treating the dog cruelly. I concluded that he was identifying the dog with his younger brother, Jim, who was his

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mother's favourite, and when one day I saw him beating Spot I went up to it, stroked it, and said: "Hullo, Jim." Apparently I made it conscious to the boy that he had been letting out his hate of his rival brother on the poor dog, for he ceased being cruel to it. But his sadism was not touched. All I had done was to cure a symptom, and his sadism transferred itself to people, especially women. My original *Problem* books are full of similar instances, interesting perhaps, but of no value to the patient at all. It took me many years to learn that knowing the cause of a complex does not cure it, and more important, to learn that curing is not the chief function of the educationist. His job is to educate in such a way that the new generations will not need any curing. Hence I have decided to write a new book about the problem family, retaining, if necessary, some parts of the original books. One fault these books had . . . that I was ignorant of childhood before the age of five.

Now I have a child of my own, aged one year at present, I cannot claim much knowledge of babies, but studying this one baby girl has shown me the tremendous importance of the early days of life, and traits in child character that used to puzzle me I now recognise as being the result of early mishandling and parental ignorance. So that when I wrote my earlier books I was thinking of parents with children of six onwards, while today I think of children from the word go. I see now that the problem child is made a problem in the cradle. I see that the ignorance of child nature is appallingly universal, and I fear that the doctors and maternity homes do damage that is irreparable when they instruct young mothers to feed their babies by time-table, allowing the poor mites to scream if they want to feed before the hour appointed by the tin-god doctor strikes; when they tell mothers to bind their babies with blankets. I am

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writing this in U.S.A. and I have just picked up a booklet entitled: *Instructions for Expectant Mothers*, issued by a well-known Hospital of a Woman's Medical College. Here are a few quotations:

"PRIVATE PARTS. These should be kept scrupulously clean, to avoid discomfort, disease *and the formation of bad habits* (my italics).

THUMB- and FINGER-SUCKING. This filthy and pernicious habit . . . may be prevented by placing the baby's arms in a cardboard tube in order that it may not be able to bend the arm at the elbow.

Don't pick up the baby each time he cries.

Don't lie in bed with the baby."

When I think that thousands of women doctors will absorb this disgustingly stupid teaching, and pass it on to ignorant young mothers, I feel like despairing of humanity: I feel like crying: Let humanity retire and give the rats or the rabbits a chance, for no animal ever shows crass and criminal stupidity in dealing with its young. I feel like kicking myself for being so long in realising how much the sickness of the world is due to the doctors and moralists who damage the child long before the teacher has anything to do with him. The world is sick, neurotic, prone to hate and war, and the emotional pest of life, as Reich calls it, dates from the hour of birth, or probably months before it, for no one knows how a baby grows in the womb of an unhappy, repressed mother.

I hope I am making it clear why treating Bobby for sadism or stealing is so relatively unimportant, and, moreover, doubtful of success. Our approach to the problem child must be the widest possible. In my early books I wrote:

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There is never a problem child; there is only a problem parent. I was right. But perhaps it would be better to say that there is only a problem humanity. That is why the atomic bomb is so sinister. It is under the control of people who are anti-life (for what person whose arms were tied in the cradle is not anti-life?). There is a great amount of good fellowship and love in humanity, and it is my firm belief that new generations that have not been warped in babyhood will live at peace with each other . . . if the haters of today do not destroy the world before these new generations have time to take control. The fight is an unequal one, for the haters control education, religion, the laws, the armies, the vile prisons. While a very few educationists strive to allow the good in all children to grow in freedom, the vast majority of children are being moulded by the anti-life enemy with its hateful system of punishments, Verbots, militarism, perverted sexuality . . . girls in some convents still have to cover themselves when they take a bath, lest they see their own bodies. Boys are still told by parent and teacher that masturbation is a sin leading to madness and all sorts of fearful consequences. Recently I saw a woman spank a baby of about ten months for crying when it was thirsty.

I ask myself: Is humanity worth saving? Is it worth while to write a book about children and parents? I answer . . . YES. The love attitude to life is growing. Spanking of children grows less, and corporal punishment in schools has been abolished in many countries . . . of which, I blush to say, Britain is not one. Compulsory teaching of religion does not exist in large countries like Russia and U.S.A., and church-going in nearly all countries has diminished. The anti-life majority is not so compact as it was—say—twenty years ago. Unneurotic life is on the horizon, and if,

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by a miracle, atomic warfare does not come, freedom to live and love and work will triumph in the end. So that we must work on the assumption that life is to go on, for to fold our hands and wait for hate to destroy us all would be futile and treacherous to young humanity. We dare not lose hope. The atomic men with their destructive power arising from dead matter are a great danger, but on the other hand we have Reich and his discovery of living power in the Orgone, pointing to positive life and love and work and knowledge. Someone said that the race is between socialism and the atomic bomb. It is a deeper race than that; it is a race between the believers in deadness and the believers in life. And no man dare remain neutral. That will mean death. We must be on one side or the other. The death side gives us the problem child; the life side will give us the healthy child.

<sup>21</sup> *Accessioned No. 448*

No. 448.

## C H A P T E R   I I

### **The Baby**

I HAVE said that the warping of child life begins in the nursery. No man ever gets entirely free from his earliest treatment. I find in myself fears that arose in infancy, fears that years of analysis could not remove. They are beyond the influence of rationalism. A friend who died recently, a brilliant writer with a balanced attitude to life, used to get into a panic when it thundered. We smile at the father who monopolises his son's model engine, playing with it for hours because as a child he was not allowed freedom to live out his play interest in childish things. The tragedy of man is that, like the dog, his character can be moulded. You cannot mould the character of a cat, an animal superior to the dog: you can give a dog a bad conscience but you cannot give a conscience to a cat. Many people prefer dogs because their obedience, their flattering tail-wagging afford visible proof of the master's superiority and worth. The nursery training is very like the kennel training, and the whipped child, like the whipped

puppy, grows into an obedient, inferior adulthood. And as we train our dogs to suit our own purposes, so we train our children, ignoring the truth that, while a man has an idea of what a good dog should be, he dare not assume what a child should be. We may be superior to dogs, in our estimation, but we dare not be superior to children.

In that kennel, the nursery, the human dogs must be clean; they must not bark too much; they must obey the whistle; they must feed when we think it convenient for them to feed. I saw a hundred thousand obedient, fawning dogs wag their tails in the Tempelhof, Berlin, when, in 1935 or so, the great trainer Hitler whistled his commands. Fascism began, and begins in the nursery with the first interference of child nature. That first interference is in the nutrient sphere, when, after the newly-born child has been fasted for twenty-four hours, a time-table of feeding is brought into force, surfacey to prevent the comfort of adults from being interfered with, but deep down, the motive is hate of young life and nature. This is seen in the indifferent ease in which the family listens to the screams of the hungry baby. It is a pleasant thought, however, that many mothers are fighting against this idiotic time-table feeding. Any and every baby will, if left to itself, evolve its own time-table, which means that a baby has the capacity for self regulation, not only in milk feeding, but later on in solid feeding. I have had no experience of that phase myself, but modern parents tell me that a child of two will choose the food that is best for it when given a choice of different foods. Ilse Ollendorff writes of her small boy: "When he started eating solid foods, he was offered his choice of food and the amount he would take. If he refused a certain kind of vegetable for instance, he would either be given another kind, or his dessert first, and he would very

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often eat the refused vegetable after his dessert. Sometimes he would refuse to eat anything, a sure sign that he was not hungry, and he would then eat very well at his next meal. . . . Mothers do not trust the organism of the child and think that they know better what it needs."<sup>1</sup>

This feeding business is easily tested, and any enquiring mother of a young child can set out a table with chocolate, ice-cream, sweets, wholemeal bread, tomatoes, lettuce, etc., giving the child complete freedom to eat what he or she wants. My guess is that the average child will select a balanced diet in less than a week.

Thumb-sucking in later childhood and adolescence is the most obvious result of time-table feeding. Sucking has two components, the hunger for food and the sensual joy in sucking, and if the baby has to scream because the clock isn't ready for it, both components become dammed up so that, when feeding time comes, there is a rush of oral pleasure which is satisfied before the hunger desire. Homer Lane said this over thirty years ago, claiming that some malnutrition was due to this satisfying the pleasure instinct too soon, so that the child, left with the hunger instinct alone, ceased sucking before his hunger was satisfied. The claim may or may not be valid. What is certainly true is that thumb-sucking means an attempt to get early pleasure that was interfered with in some way or other. We eat because we are hungry, and men cast adrift in boats during the war wolfed raw fish and sea-weed, which cannot have tasted well. In ordinary life we try to eat with as much mouth pleasure as possible, and that goes for adult and baby. Thumb-sucking means that mouth pleasure was not allowed a normal path. The road to thumb-sucking is time-table feeding. I have seen a mother, acting after the pre-

<sup>1</sup> *Annals of the Orgone Institute*, New York.

cepts of a maternity home doctor, snatch the baby from the breast because her stopwatch said that the baby had had its allotted minutes to feed. If that is not the way to fashion problem children, I am gravelled to know what other mad way would be so effective. It is almost incredible that ignorant doctors and parents should dare to interfere with a baby's natural impulses and behaviour, destroying joy and spontaneity with their absurd ideas of guiding and moulding. These guides begin the universal sickness of mankind, psychical and somatic, and later school and church continue the process of an education that is anti-pleasure and anti-freedom.

The next soul-destroying process in the nursery is the cleanliness one. The bed-wetter is the victim of the cleanliness fanatic, and when a chamber pot appears in a film, audiences rock with laughter. Any mother who by word or expression shows that she disapproves of a child when it soils its garments or the floor is helping to increase the sickness of the world. Children when left to go at their own speed will automatically begin to use the pot, but only if they have self regulation from the word go. There is no cause whatsoever for a child to get complexes about natural functions.

Mistakes about feeding and evacuation are bad enough, but mistakes about sex are the most dangerous of all. Nothing can be done with those unconscious criminals who bind up a child's hands to prevent it touching its genitals: they are mostly past redemption, yet quite modern mothers will bind their babies up tightly because doctor says they like to feel secure when they go to sleep. Too often the unconscious motive is to keep the hands from straying to the genitals. Every neurosis starts with the early genital Verbot. The impotence, frigidity, anxiety of later life, dates from

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the tying up of the hands or the snatching away of the hands, usually with a spank. A child left to touch its genitals has every chance of growing up with a sincere, happy attitude to sex. At the present stage of psychology no one knows definitely what harm is done by early inhibitions; for example, it is impossible to say what early repressions lead to homosexuality. My school, Summerhill, does not take children under five, and therefore has often had to deal with children who were wrongly handled in the nursery, yet in twenty-seven years the school has not turned out one homosexual.

The training in cleanliness and the training in sex hate become one constellation, since the genitals and the evacuation outlets are together, and the same adjectives . . . naughty, dirty, etc., are applied to both departments, and mothers who "teach" cleanliness are always those who will "teach" purity. A peasant woman was witness in a case of exhibitionism. She was genuinely shocked. I said to her: "Come, come, Jean, shocked? Why, you've had seven children."

"Mr. Neill," she said solemnly, "I never saw John's . . . I never saw my man naked all my married life." It was true; many couples, especially working-class couples, never see each other's bodies until one of them dresses the other's corpse. I have heard English women protest at seeing a baby of one year naked by the seaside.

The surprising thing is that, with millions reared in sex hate and fear, the world is not more neurotic than it is. To me that means that natural humanity has the innate power of finally overcoming the evils that are imposed on it. There is a slow trend to freedom, sexual and other; in my boyhood a woman bathed with stockings; she wore long dresses. In my grandfather's time a man had to cover his flies with a flap. Today women show legs and men are not

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ashamed of fly-buttons. I am an optimist about humanity. Children are getting more freedom with every generation. Today only a few lunatics put cayenne pepper on a baby's thumb to stop sucking; today only a few countries beat their children in school.

I blame the medical profession for much of the wrong rearing of children. Doctors are not as a rule trained in child rearing, yet to many women the doctor's word is the voice of God. If he says that a child must be spanked for masturbation, the poor mother does not know that he is talking through his own sex-guilt and not through his scientific knowledge of child nature. I blame the doctors for prescribing the fatuous time-table feeding and hand binding. "Don't lie in bed with the baby," says the American booklet I quoted some pages back. In heaven's name why not?

I do not know what effects post-weaning feeding has on the soul of the child. All I know is that mothers are seldom educated about diet. I see poor mothers feeding their small children mostly on potato chips and white bread. In Britain the government is giving good propaganda about infant food, and ignorant women are now giving orange juice to babies. I think that body health will benefit long before soul health; people have no repressions about food, and apart from the possible unconscious purity motive in preferring white bread and rice, there is no guilt attached to eating. Gluttony is a very minor sin, especially in these days of rationing. Mothers will accept guidance about balanced food long before they accept any suggestions about sex freedom. The body may be well nourished, but it still remains vile. The danger is that mothers, while accepting education about food values, will fear to trust the nature of the child to choose its own balanced diet.

I have tried to show that the problem child is the child

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who is unnaturally treated in the sucking, cleanliness, sexual sphere. The next stage in the making of problemicity is that of general training, which usually means teaching the child to behave in such a way that adults will have as quiet a life as possible. Hence the importance attached to obedience, to manners, to docility. I saw a boy of three the other day put out in the garden by his mother. His suit was spotless. He began to play with earth and soiled his clothes slightly. Mamma rushed out, smacked him, took him in and sent him out weeping in new clothes. In ten minutes he had earthed his suit, and the process was repeated. I thought of telling the woman that her son would hate her for life, and hate life itself, but I realised that nothing I could say would sink in. Nearly every time I go to a town or city, I see a child of three stumble and fall, and the mother spanks it for falling. On almost every railway trip I hear a mother say: "If you go out to that corridor again, Willie, the policeman will come for you." Most children are reared on a tissue of lies and ignorant prohibitions.

Many a mother who treats her child fairly well at home will storm at him or spank him outside because she is fearful of neighbours' opinion. The child must from the start be forced to fit itself into our insane society. Recently, when on a Brains Trust in a seaside town in England, I remarked: "Do you mothers realise that every time you spank your child you show that you are hating your child?" The reaction was tremendous; they shouted at me savagely, and when later in the evening I gave my views on the question: "How can we improve the moral and religious atmosphere in the home?" the audience hissed me with great gusto. It was a shock to me, for when I go lecturing I lecture mostly to those who believe what I believe, but here was a working- and middle-class audience who

had never heard of child psychology. It made me realise how entrenched is the compact majority that is against freedom for children . . . and for themselves.

Every child has the right to wear clothes of such a kind that it does not matter a brass farthing if they get messy or not. Every child has the right of freedom of speech. . . . I have had many years of hearing new children let off all the bloodies and hells they had been forbidden to say in the nursery. Every child has the right to live its own life, but not the right to spoil the life of its parents, and this is the most difficult task of parent and teacher, to know what is freedom and what is licence. The spoiled child is the one that has been allowed licence by fond parents. My wife and I have learned to recognise the note in Zoë's voice that means an attempt to bully us. This occurs very seldom, but if we gave in to her it would spoil her later. A child with a power complex is not to be desired. It is easy for a pair of parents to rear a child without giving it complexes. The child must never be made afraid, must never be made to feel guilty. Fear one cannot eliminate; our Zoë starts violently if a door bangs; what one can eliminate is the fear that is superimposed on a child . . . fear of punishment, of an angry God, of parental disapproval. Guilt can be eliminated, for it is due to conscience, and that is imposed from without. The child who is reared without sex guilt will never want any religion. Sex is the big "sin" for which a child seeks forgiveness. Wash out that sin and the child has no sense of being wicked, and has no desire to ask forgiveness from any god, earthly (father) or heavenly (God).

### The Unhappy Marriage

SOME marriages are happy, and considering the infant training that the great majority of people had, it is a matter for astonishment that there should be any happy marriages at all. If sex is dirty in the nursery it cannot be very clean in the wedding bed. In my previous *The Problem Parent* I said that the marriage failure was primarily due to incompatibility of temperament and taste, pointing out that a professor could fall in love with a doll of the Dora Copperfield type, and marry her, only to discover the enormous gulf between them. True in its way of course, but not true enough. The unsuccessful marriage more often breaks down in the sexual sphere. The prevalence of impotency in man and frigidity in woman is not realised, yet how can we expect a decent marriage hygiene when sex is taboo in youth, when many children are sent to segregated schools, where their sex is forced to seek homosex? Our professor could live happily for years with his doll wife if their sex life were fully satisfied. There is a saying that a

## THE UNHAPPY MARRIAGE

man needs two wives, a day wife and a night wife, a phrase that seeks to divide femininity into two parts, higher and lower. I don't want to exaggerate; I don't want to say that an intellectual man could live happily with a moron who had a beautiful face and body. What I do say is that the intellectual side of marriage is the minor one, that a marriage of heads is a dull, cold affair, whereas a marriage of hearts is one of warmth and giving. Nature does not make a man or a woman fall in love because of the intellectual prowess of the partner, and quite sensibly, the film director chooses beautiful women and handsome men for his films, for he knows his audience appreciates sex appeal much more than it does highbrow appeal. Where the film producer falls down is in ending the story with the lovers in each other's arms, and the band getting ready to play the wedding march, that is he stops before united love begins.

The reason, of course, is that pre-marriage love is a lovely romance that touches the heart of everyone, while marriage is a dull business of catching trains, cooking food, wheeling prams, mowing lawns. And in reality that is what marriage too often is. When the married lovers are happy in their sex relationships they wheel prams happily, and the husband catches the 8.45 train with a grudge at leaving home. Where the sex relationship is a failure everything else in the marriage is a failure. The children are a failure, for they miss the warmth of the home that is necessary to their own warm life.

The sex repressions of their parents unconsciously give them the same repressions. The unhappy marriage means a man and woman with stiff stomachs, and stiff stomachs mean all that is unhappy and hateful in life. Years ago Reich pointed out that the army rigidity of body, the Hitler salute, the goose-step showed the rigidity that means

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the suppression and hate of sex. The unhappy marriage is caused by this rigidity, and it hands it on to the new generation. The unhappy couple, reared to hate sex, hate each other, and the worst problem children come from such parents. I used to think that a free system of divorce would solve the problem, but I began to note that very often a man would divorce an unsuitable wife and then marry a sweet little girl who appeared to be the exact opposite of his wife. In two years the sweet little girl showed herself to be a replica of the first wife, straight-line-mouthing, hard, aggressive. Yet divorce is the only possible solution when two unhappy people are tied to each other. More than once have I seen children cease to be hateful problems when their parents divorced. The tension was relieved, the tension caused by the miserable thought: Which side am I on?

Now let us consider the child of the unhappy home. He is always homesick when he leaves for school, why it is difficult to say. It is likely that his unhappy home gives him an acute anxiety . . . What is happening at home this minute? The most probable explanation lies in the fact that an unhappy mother, thwarted in her love of her mate, transfers too much of her love (and hate) to her children. I notice that when an unhappy mother brings a new child to Summerhill, the child clings to her in tears, screaming to be taken home, and I notice also that if the child does not scream enough the mother is annoyed. She *wants* her child to be homesick, for to her the greater the homesickness, the more the child loves her. Often the wretched child is playing happily five minutes after mother's train has departed.

This transferring husband love to a child has alarming results. When the mother makes her son a husband Ersatz, the boy is bound to her with hoops of steel, and because he

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is so bound he has as strong a wish to get free, a wish that is expressed in terms of hate and intense irritation against his mother. Such a son often has a sadistic attitude to all women later, and his own marriage repeats the loveless cycle. Sometimes his hate of mother is expressed in terms of concern. I have seen a youth of seventeen make his mother's life a misery by a constant concern for her comfort. . . . Mother, let me give you a cushion in your chair: Mother, sit over here out of the sun.

When it is the father who gives his daughter the love that his wife should receive, the mechanism is different. In such a case I seldom see the repressed wish to be free that one sees in the mother's boy. The girl feels the father's possessiveness and likes it, and automatically compares her wonderful father with other men, finding the others inferior. The danger of her marrying a father substitute is great. Daddy's darling daughter usually has a hard time adapting herself to love and life, but the spoiled son has the harder time, for he is usually hated by his father, who often has a son-mother attitude to his wife, and is jealous of the son. Child-beating fathers hate their wives because they are wives when the men want them to be mothers, that is, women beyond the reach of conscious sex interest. The impotent father and the frigid mother are the worst suppressors of sex in their children.

I have said that mother's darling boy has a harder time than has father's petted daughter. I may be wrong, but I do not see the mother's jealousy of the father-daughter constellation producing the marked problemicity seen so often in sons. Mother's chains on a son never satisfy; they are always being striven against, whereas father's chains on a daughter are more or less accepted as pleasurable, so that the girl has not the boy's tragic question: Which side am

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Ion? This does not mean that there are no problem daughters; it means that generally speaking the problem son is aggressive, anti-social, thieving, while the problem daughter is spiteful, catty, unhappy. And in considering problem children we must realise that boys are more interested in things, while girls are more interested in people, so that in a school it is easier to live with problem boys, for they make and break material, while the problem girls hang about in bunches, trying hatefully to get a reaction from adults. The problem boy will be a crook while the problem girl will be a cat.

What can we do about the unhappy marriage? Some middle-class parents seek a solution in psychoanalysis, which very often results in a definite breaking up of the marriage. But, even if analysis were more successful than it usually is, we cannot psychoanalyse the world. Curative work with individuals is a peddling business which can never affect the masses of the world. After many years of analysing children, I have almost given it up, realising that the solution for humanity lies in education, not curing the neurotic. So that from this angle I must confess that I have nothing to say that will solve the marriage question of to-day. It is a hard thought, but if Mr. and Mrs. Brown are living together unhappily because they were reared in an anti-life atmosphere, there is nothing one can do about it. That sounds rank pessimism, yet we can be optimistic only if we are striving laboriously to treat the new children in such a way that they will not hate sex and life. Every time I see a child spanked, a child lied to, a child made ashamed of its nakedness, I see with misery that child grow up into a hateful husband or wife. When the *News Chronicle* took a Gallup poll about corporal punishment in schools, and the majority of teachers were in favour of its retention, I

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confess that I found it hard to remain optimistic about humanity. When I read of the law giving a poor homosexual a seven years' sentence I confess to a feeling of despair. H. G. Wells in his *Mind at the End of Its Tether*, written before the atom bomb was invented, said that there was no future for humanity: it had had its trial and failed. Nevertheless I remain an optimist. I see a very minute fraction of children growing up in freedom and happiness, sincere, brave, lovable in a world of hate, and I am optimistic enough to believe that this spirit of freedom will grow until man is as healthy and uninhibited as the lower animals are. It will take time, a long, long, time.

## C H A P T E R I V

### Discipline

DISCIPLINE is a means to an end: it is the means to the end that union is strength. If I were a member of—say—the Communist Party, I would have to toe the line to the Party programme for education. That is why the C.P. is strong even in countries where its numbers are few. The discipline of an army is solely aimed at making for efficiency in fighting. All such discipline subordinates the individual to the cause, and in disciplined countries life is cheap, as the popular phrase has it.

There is another discipline that is different, that of an orchestra, different in that the first fiddle obeys the conductor because he is as keen on a good performance as the conductor is. The private who jumps to attention does not, as a rule, care for the efficiency of the army; he knows that if he disobeys he will be punished, and every army is ruled mostly by fear. School discipline can be of the orchestra type when teachers are good, but too often it is of the army type, and the same applies to the home. A happy home is

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an orchestra or a football team, while a miserable home is a barracks that is ruled by hate discipline. The odd thing is that homes with a team-spirit discipline often tolerate an army discipline in the outside school. Boys are beaten by prefects and masters, boys who are never beaten at home. When humane parents protest against the beating discipline of the school and go to law about it, in most cases the law takes the side of the caning teacher. The parents of the world could abolish corporal punishment tomorrow if they wanted to. Apparently they do not want to.

In the home there must be discipline. I shall not allow my Zoë to play with my typewriter. Every member of a family must have individual rights and collective duties. In a happy home discipline looks after itself; life is a pleasant give and take. Parents and children are chums, co-workers. In the unhappy home discipline is used as a weapon of hate, and obedience becomes a virtue. The parents, feeling in their bones that they are failures, seek to relive their lives in their offspring. . . . "I was a failure because I didn't learn nor obey nor pray to God . . . I'll see that my son will be kept to the straight and narrow path." Children are chattels, things owned, and they must be a credit to their owner. Hence the futility of Sunday clothes and clean hands. I find that the parent who worries most about Billy's learning to read and write is he or she who feels a failure in life because of lack of educational attainments.

It is the self-disapproving parent who believes in strict discipline. The jovial clubman who carries a stock of obscene stories will sternly reprove his son if he talks about waterclosets. The untruthful mother will spank her child for lying. I have seen a man with pipe in mouth leather his son for smoking. I have heard a man say as he hit his son of

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twelve . . . "I'll teach you to swear, you young bugger." When I remonstrated he said glibly: "That's different. He's a kid." Home discipline is always a projection of self hate. The adult has striven for perfection in his own life, has failed miserably to reach it, and now attempts to find it in his children. And all because he cannot love, all because he fears pleasure as the very devil. That, of course, is why man ever invented the devil, the fellow who has all the best tunes, who loves life and joy and sex. The perfection aim is to conquer the devil, hence religion and asceticism and mysticism and all irrationalism, hence the crucifixion of the flesh in the form of beating and sexual abstinence and impotency. It might justly be said that strict home discipline aims at castration in its widest sense, castration of life itself. No obedient child can ever become a free man or woman; no child punished for masturbation can ever be fully orgasmically potent. I have said that the parent wants the child to become what he or she failed to become: there is more in it than that; every repressed parent at the same time is determined that his or her child shall not get more out of life than its parents got. Dead parents won't allow children to be alive. And the dead parent always has an exaggerated fear of the future, today more than ever with atomic warfare overhanging civilisation. Discipline will save his children, he thinks, because, having had his own inner will castrated in infancy, he has no faith in the inner strength of his child, hence to him, the compulsion must come from a disciplined outside. In the same way his lack of confidence in the inner self makes him postulate an outside God who will compel goodness and truth. Discipline is thus a branch of religion. The main difference between my school Summerhill and a State or Public School is that in my school we have faith in the inner personality; we know

that if Tommy wants to be a doctor he will study voluntarily to pass the entrance examination, but the disciplined school is sure that Tommy will never be a doctor unless he is caned or forced to study at prescribed hours. The curse of humanity is the external compulsion whether it comes from the Pope or the State or the teacher or the parent. It is Fascism *in toto* . . . the strident Führer bawls his commands and a million sheep go where he directs. Religionists cry: "See what happens when the masses give up religion? They must have a god of some kind and they choose a house painter." And they are right in their limited way even if they don't see that their "great absentee" God, as Wells called him, is as harmful to humanity as many Hitlers. It is true that humanity demands a God. How can it be otherwise when the home is ruled by tin gods of both sexes, gods who demand perfect truth and moral behaviour? I can no longer think in terms of Freudian psychology with its father and mother complexes and its sex symbolism. They had and still have their day, a very important day too, but we get nowhere by saying that the man who knocks the heads off dandelions with his walking stick has a castration complex. Our aim should be to keep complexes from being formed, and this can only be done by showing parents how complexes are made in the home.

It is quite easy to have in the home the kind of discipline that we have in Summerhill, where freedom means doing what you like so long as you don't interfere with the freedom of others. The aim is self-discipline. It does not involve spoiling the child. If a baby of three wants to walk over the dining-table you simply tell him he must not. He must obey, but on the other hand you must obey him when necessary. I get out of small children's rooms if they tell me to get out. Children are very wise and soon accept social

laws. But they should not be exploited as they too often are. . . . "Fetch my hammer, Willie," when the child is intent on an engrossing game. Fear must be entirely eliminated, fear of adults, of punishment, of disapproval, of God.

Only hate can flourish in a fear atmosphere. Manners should never be taught. If a child of seven wants to eat with his fingers he should be free to do so. No child should ever be asked to behave in such a way that Aunt Mary will approve. Sacrifice all the relations and neighbours in the world rather than stunt a child for life by making him behave insincerely. Manners come of themselves. Old Summerhillians have excellent manners even if some of them licked their plates at the age of twelve. No child should be taught to say Thank You, and any parent who expects gratitude knows nothing of child nature. Children hate to be indebted to anyone, and I have had a long experience of resentment among pupils whom I kept for nothing or for much reduced fees; they expressed more hate against me than twenty times their number of paying pupils. Shaw wrote: "We cannot sacrifice ourselves for others without coming to hate those for whom we have sacrificed ourselves." It is true, and the corollary is true, that we cannot sacrifice ourselves for others without coming to be hated by those for whom we have sacrificed ourselves. The word gratitude could well be eliminated from the dictionary. The cheerful giver does not seek gratitude, and parents who expect their children to be grateful are always doomed to disappointment.

I grant that discipline in the home is more difficult than discipline in a school. In Summerhill when a child of seven makes himself a social nuisance, the whole community expresses its disapproval, and since social approval is something that everyone, child and adult, desires, the child

learns to behave well. In the home, where so many emotional factors enter, things are not so easy. The harassed housewife, cooking the dinner, cannot treat her fractious child with social disapproval, nor can the tired father when he finds his new seedbed footmarked. What I say is that in a home where the child has had self regulation from the start ordinary demands for discipline do not arise.

I am staying with my friend Wilhelm Reich in Maine, U.S.A. while I write. His son, Peter, is three. The lake at the door is deep, and Reich and his wife say to Peter that he should not go near the water. Having had no hateful training, and therefore having trust in his parents, Peter does not go and the parents know that they need not worry. The parents who discipline with fear and authority would live here with their nerves on edge. Children are so accustomed to being lied to that when mother says that water is dangerous they simply don't believe her, and they have a defiant wish to go to the water. The lying is not necessary; the child disciplined from above will express its hate of authority by annoying its parents, and indeed much childish misbehaviour is a visible proof of wrong treatment. The balanced child accepts the voice of knowledge if there is love in the home. If there is hate in the home he accepts nothing, or he accepts things negatively and is destructive and cheeky and dishonest. World neurosis begins with parental discipline in every sphere, but mainly in the sex sphere. I shall discuss this later. At the moment I am trying to tell parents that the future of humanity rests with them. If they continue to ruin the life force in their children by arbitrary authority, crime and war and misery will go on flourishing. If they continue they will lose the love of their children, for no one can love what one fears. Children are wise; they will react with love to love, but with hate to

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hate. They will react easily to discipline of the team type.

The army type of discipline produces all that is bad in human nature, and I aver that badness is not in human nature originally any more than it is in rabbit or lion nature. Chain a dog and a good dog becomes a bad dog; discipline a child and a good social child becomes a bad insincere hater. For twenty-seven years I have seen nasty, cheeky, hateful children come to the freedom of Summerhill, and in every case a gradual change took place, and in time these spoiled children became happy, social, sincere, friendly. I once thought that my psychological treatment made them so, until I discovered that those who refused treatment also became good citizens. Environment will cure most child troubles, and that is what I want parents to realise, that given the good environment in the home, the nastiness, hate, destructiveness will never arise.

## C H A P T E R V

### The Dishonest Parent

WE ARE all dishonest. There are few people who will not smuggle at the Customs. Many respectable citizens hopefully press Button B before making a telephone call. Many a man will understate his income when filling up his Income Tax Return, and be genuinely upset if his son steals a penny. I once had a boy of sixteen sent to me as a bad thief, and when he arrived at the station he gave up the half-ticket his father had bought for him in London. And apart from the dishonesty in money and goods our social life almost compels us to be dishonest. I once heard a religious woman boast that she had set her family a strict example of honesty . . . and ten minutes later I heard her tell the maid to say she was out when an unwelcome visitor called. Most of our mechanical etiquette is a living lie; we say Thank You when we do not mean it, doff our hats to women we do not respect . . . but why go on with illustrations? I knew one man who never compromised with truths; he said what he thought and refused to live

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even a minor lie. He was a very lonely man. Telling social lies may be a venial offence, but living a lie is unpardonable, and it is the parent who lives a lie that is so dangerous.

"I have asked from my son only one thing—absolute truth at all times," said the father of a thieving son of sixteen. What possible chance has the son of such a man? His home was a glaring lie; he hated his wife and was hated by her in return, and the fact was disguised under a mask of "darlings" and "dearests." When a lover calls his sweetheart darling he loves her: when a man calls his wife darling it often means that he has ceased to love her. That son dimly sensed that something was far wrong with his home, and his stealing was his pathetic way of finding the love that was lacking in the home.

The lie about birth and sex can wait till later in this book. It is the super lie, and all the minor lies are likely to be derivatives from it, for the parent who is honest about sex will not be dishonest about other things. Lies about the policeman coming to naughty children, lies about smoking stopping growth, lies about mummy having a headache (so do be quiet) are rife in a million homes, especially homes of the poor and lower middle class. How to get rid of such lies is a problem slow to solve. When children leave the artificial discipline of school with no real education at all, they simply take the easy, unthinking way. They were lied to, therefore they will lie to their offspring. They feel that there is a gulf between adult and child; they feel that they must act in front of children so as to preserve their dignity and superiority. How many fathers will confess to their children that they fear thunder or policemen or cows? Few men want their children to know that they were called Snuffles at school. The family lie has two motives, to keep

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the child well behaved, and to impress the child with parental perfection.

Worst of all is the religious and moral lie. "God won't love you if you do that." "Jesus is hurt when you use a swear word like skunk" (U.S.A. book by an Oxford Grouper). In my young days it was: "God will strike you down dead," or "You'll go to hell." It is true that such lies are used less frequently than in former days, but unfortunately it is also true that some non-religious parents use lies that are the equivalent of those irrational lies. They will honestly believe that they have enlightened their sons about sex in an a-moral way and then proceed to make sex fearful by dwelling in an exaggerated way on the dangers of venereal disease or of pregnancy. They will use the uplift lie, persuading the child that Thackeray is greater than Edgar Wallace, when most children think that he isn't. It is the teacher of this type who plasters the walls with prints of the Old Masters which are meant to say to pupils: "Your comics are poor stuff"; who plays them Bach when they love swing jazz. The adult who lies to children, lies even by indirect means, is he or she who has no real understanding of the child. Hence our whole educational system which is full of lies. Our schools hand on the lie that obedience and industry are virtues, that history and French are education.

Recently a woman teacher left my school to teach in a London kindergarten. Her little pupils asked her where babies came from. Next morning half a dozen furious mothers came up calling her a dirty-minded bitch, and demanding her being sacked. The churches perpetuate the lie that man is born in sin and that he requires redemption. The law furthers the lie that humanity can be bettered by hate in the form of punishment, and the doctors and drug

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firms keep up the lie that health depends on inorganic drugs and inoculations and vaccines and operations. In a society full of lies the poor parent finds it most difficult to be honest, and when he lies he feels that he is backed up by society at large. He feels it no more dangerous to say: "If you masturbate you'll go mad or impotent," than to say, as the doctors say: "Gold injections will cure rheumatoid arthritis." This suggests that the origin of the lie is credulous ignorance, and certainly in all parental lying there is a credulous ignorance of the damage done to the child.

But this is all diagnosis which does not help matters much. Thinking positively I hold that the parent does not need to lie, moreover, dare not lie. Many homes exist without lying, and it is from such homes that come clear-eyed, sincere children. A parent can answer any and every question with truth, from asking where babies come from to telling mother's age, a question which is oddly enough either lied about or evaded. I have never consciously told a lie to my pupils in twenty-seven years, and indeed never had any desire to . . . but, stay, that is not quite correct, for I told a big lie last term. A girl, whose unhappy history I knew, stole a pound. The theft committee, three boys, saw her spend it on ice-cream and cigarettes, and they cross-examined her. "I got the pound from Neill," she told them, and they brought her to me, asking: "Did you give Liz a quid?" Hastily sensing the situation I replied blandly: "Why, yes, I did." Had I given her away I knew that for ever afterwards she would have had no trust in me, and her symbolic stealing of love in the form of money would have received another hostile setback. I had to prove that I was on her side all the way. I know, however, that if her home had been honest and free such a situation would never have

arisen. I lied with a purpose, a curative purpose, but in all other circumstances I dare not lie.

Children when free do not lie very much. Our village policeman, calling one day, was much astonished when a boy came into my office saying: "Hi, Neill, I've broken a lounge window." Children lie mostly to protect themselves, and lying flourishes in a fear home. Abolish the fear and the lying will decay. There is, however, a type of child (and adult) lie that has no fear basis, the lie due to phantasy . . . Mummy, I saw a dog as big as a cow, which is on the same level as the angler's lie about the one that got away: the lie enhances the personality of the liar. The obvious way to react to such lies is to enter into the spirit of the game, so that when Billy tells me his daddy has a Rolls Royce I say: "I know. Beauty, isn't it. Can you drive it?" I question if this romantic lying would obtain among children who had been self-regulated from birth; I don't think they would need to overcompensate for their inferiority by making up tall stories.

Finally I glance at the possibility of child lying as being an imitation of parental falsehood. It is impossible for a child to be truthful in a home where father and mother no longer love each other: the wretched pretence that the poor couple have to keep up cannot deceive the child who is driven into an unreal phantasy world of make-believe. Remember that children feel when they do not know. An illegitimate child does not *know* he is born out of wedlock, yet he *feels* that he is different from other children, not, of course if he knows the truth and is among people who don't care whether he was born in wedlock or not. It is because feeling is so much more important than knowing, that ignorant parents do so much harm with their lies

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and Verbots. It is the heart of the child that is damaged, rather than the head, but heads never cause neurosis; only hearts do.

Parents must tell adopted children the truth about their adoption. A stepmother who lets a child of the first marriage believe that he is her own son is looking for trouble, and in most cases will get it. There is no other way but the way of absolute truth for a child. If daddy is an ex-convict, sonny should know it; if mummy was a barmaid, daughter should be told. I have seen some bad trauma in later life when adolescents discovered hidden truths, and there are always a few hateful people around who will gladly tell youth spiteful truths. Armour your children, parents, against all spiteful busybodies by making up your minds never to lie to any child; your own or anyone else's child.

## C H A P T E R      V I

### The School

LET me leave the home for the moment and write about the attitude of the parent to the school. Ours is an age of experts. We call in the expert plumber or surgeon, and usually accept their verdicts and skill. Only in one sphere does every man feel himself an expert—in education. True that in practice the parent accepts the conventional system of education, but he flatters himself that he does so after carefully weighing the evidence for and against. To the parent the individual teacher is no expert; his views can be challenged, but the great gospel of the curriculum is accepted as an educational Ten Commandments. A modern father may challenge the value of Greek, but he is unlikely to challenge the value of Mathematics or French. So that when I say that every man is an expert in education I mean that he is an expert within the great law of School Subjects. Some advanced parents may scorn the old methods of education on the ground that they are uncreative and over intellectual, yet they will subscribe to

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the moral intellectualism of Montessori, or the Dalton Plan with its acceptance of the old uncreative subjects. They still want to rely on experts.

I have written much in my time about schools and schooling, but here the subject is the relationship of the parent to the school. Why does Brown exult when his daughter passes Matric? Why does he tell proudly that his son has just got his B.A.? Why does he think that an M.A. is an educated man? Why does he accept the segregated and prefect-ridden Public Schools and the sexless girls' boarding schools? Why is he less afraid of a segregated school that will possibly encourage homosexuality in son or daughter, than of a co-educational school where sex will find a natural outlet? He feels himself an expert in education . . . why?

He does it because school is an extension of home. Discipline at home leads automatically to discipline at school; as the child is moulded at home, so must he be further moulded at school. There is much fear in the parental attitude. Often I hear doctors and other professional men say: "I send my boys to a good Public School so that they will get a good accent and will meet people who will be useful to them later on." They take it for granted that our social system will continue as it has been for generations. Fear of the future is a very real thing in parents.

Parents want disciplined schools because the home is a patriarchal establishment. An Englishman's home is his castle, and he is the big noise therein. At school age the child moves out to the larger castle we call the school where there is a big noise with assistant lesser noises. The illustration is apt, for indeed the only one allowed to make a noise in school is the teacher. The school carries on the tradition of keeping the child down, quiet, respectful . . .

castrated. Moreover it does excellent work in treating only the head of the child; it restrains his emotional life, his creative urge; it trains him to be obedient to all the Hitlers and bosses of life. It is the bad nursery on promotion with its time-table feeding and its disapprobation of all things unclean and nappy-like in life. The fear that began in the nursery is increased by stern teachers with their canes or without them, and the average parent, seeing only the exterior child with its school blazer and later old school tie, with its superficial manners, with its worship of watched games, is pleased to see how successful his dear family has become. It is tragic to see young life sacrificed on this antediluvian altar of misnamed education. Recently a boy from one of our famous Public Schools told me he is frequently beaten. It is scarcely believable.

A visitor from—say—an older planet would consider the parents of this country morons when he was told that in many elementary schools they cane or tawse small children for mistakes in sums or spelling. Why do parents tolerate the system? The answer is that the system suits them. It disciplines their boys and girls cleverly for the parents, for the hate is given to the caning teacher or the shrewish missie, and not to the parents who hire them to do the dirty work. The system suits them because they never were allowed to live and love themselves; they were made slaves and the poor souls cannot visualise freedom. Afraid to live themselves they see to it that their children will face life fearfully. That is why they pin their faith on the old men of life who rule youth by their insane examination system. There is no danger to morals and behaviour in all the school subjects put together; no textbook could ever cause a blush to mount to a nice girl's cheeks. Parents keep schools as they are because they are safe.

Again I confess to diagnosis and polemic. Words count for little; only action counts, therefore I shall try to show the other way in education. Summerhill has seventy children who are not made to fear teachers, who are free to go to lessons or stay away for a decade, who are free to smoke or swear as much as they like, who make their own laws as a community. The result is a group of happy, sincere, busy children who are never cheeky and seldom aggressive. They can smoke (not easily today with cigarettes at 2d. each), yet I think that of old pupils at least fifty per cent are non-smokers. They pass exams if they need to.

Today we have two ex-pupils at the university, one a brilliant physicist, the other a brilliant mathematician, both boys having been free to play all day if they wanted to from the age of five. We have proved that a free child can learn as easily as, or more easily than, a disciplined pupil, for he knows what he wants in life, and will do more maths, for example, in a year than a disciplined boy, who learns maths because he must, does in five years. We have proved that freedom to study is no handicap in life, but study is a minor matter: life itself is the criterion, not exams nor intelligence tests. Our children have freedom to live out their emotions. There is no moral training, no religion, no moulding of character, and the result is not, as some might think, a gang of hooligans, breaking windows and cheeking masters, but a community of social beings with natural manners and much consideration for others.

Enemies have called Summerhill a kennel, but if it is a kennel, the puppies are unchained, and the doors are always open. I say, with the risk of being called a conceited fool, that Summerhill is years ahead of its time. It is definitely. Yet why should it be? Are we and our fellow pioneers the only educationists to see the misery of mankind?

Of course we aren't. Thousands of parents and teachers long for freedom too, only many of them simply do not have the facilities we have. Lately I had a visit from two London Headmasters, young men who believe in freedom. They asked me to visit their schools in east London, and I went. I found an irregular situation. Often young teachers write to me saying that they want to adopt free methods, but the Head won't let them. Here was the opposite situation, or at least it appeared so to me. I felt that these young Heads were trying hard to make their pupils free, while some of the older staff were holding back, fearful of new methods. The pupils looked happy, and quite unafraid of the Heads. I was taken round the classes and was expected to say something to each class. I looked at one big class sitting a bit too stiffly, I thought.

"Hands up all those who can tell lies." I said. Not a hand went up. "Hands up who can't tell lies." Every hand went up. I said to a girl: "Come on, have a go at telling a lie. I'll ask you a question, and you answer with a lie. What's your name?"

"Mary Brown."

"Her real name," remarked the Head. I tried again with a boy, pointing to the desk and asking what it was.

"Please, sir, a desk."

"It isn't," I said, "it's an elephant."

The sad fact was that they were all answering what they thought they ought to answer to a nice, dignified teacher, acting a part in insincerity. But half the next class could tell lies, and I left feeling quite optimistic. If this happened in a good school with humane and human Heads, what is happening in fear schools? Little hypocrites must be coming off the pedagogic travelling belt in their thousands. And it is a queer thought that apparently a million

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parents are content to have mass production of hypocrites and cringers. They fought Hitler with weapons, striving to slay Fascism, and they fail to see that their system is making Fascists, automatons, hating life and fearing love. The totalitarian state is on the horizon, and to begin with it will be a hateful state, a stern regimentation abolishing all personal freedom. Well, well, parents, your disciplined families will fit into that state very easily. But you ought to be conscious of the fact that this regimentation is your own hidden ideal. You fear freedom like the devil, but in the totalitarian state you will be protected against freedom. What a thought!

### The Spoiled Child

SOME parents have great difficulty in distinguishing between freedom and licence. I hear folks say: "Look at the Smiths. They have been brought up in this new freedom way, and they are a crowd of ill-mannered hooligans." And they very often are, simply because the parents have not grasped the meaning of the word freedom. I repeat that freedom is living your own life in such a way that you do not interfere with the freedom of others. The spoiled child is a nuisance to itself and to society. You see him in trains scrambling over travellers' feet, yelling in the corridor, never paying any attention to his harassed parents' pained request for quietness, a request, indeed, that he has long ceased to hear.

In later life the spoiled brat has even a worse time than has the too-disciplined son; he is the "me too" type; he grows up into a man who throws his clothes all over the bedroom, expecting someone servile to pick them up. The poor lad gets many a later kick in life too.

Often the spoiled brat is an only child. Having no one of his own age to play with, to measure himself against, he naturally identifies himself with his parents, and wants to do what they do. Considering him a world's wonder they encourage his apparent precociousness, fearing that they may lose his love if they thwart. I sometimes find this attitude in teachers who are always on the side of the child (which they should be) but for the wrong reason: they fear that they will lose popularity with the children. That is the royal road to spoiling. A good teacher or parent must have the gift of being objective; he must keep his own complexes out of the relationship with the children . . . not an easy thing to do, I grant, for we are so often blind to our own complexes.

The unhappy mother is in danger of having a spoiled son. He gets too much of the wrong type of love. (Recently an irate woman wrote me asking why I always used the pronoun "he" and not "she," accusing me of being a rabid patriarch who feels that woman is inferior. My answer is that if I have to write "he or she" all the time, grammar becomes too complicated and awkward . . . "He or she must eat his or her supper" type of thing. When I say "he" I mean any child of either sex.)

In my school a spoiled boy is a heavy handful. He wears my wife out, for she is the mother substitute. He plagues her with questions. . . . When is end of term? What time is it? Can I have sixpence? Underneath he hates his mother, and the questions have the motive of annoying mother. The spoiled girl in my school is always trying to get a reaction from me; not usually a love reaction, almost always a hate one. The newcomer will hide my pen, or tell another girl that "Neill wants you," meaning that she wants Neill to want herself.

In the days when Summerhill had many problem children, spoiled boys and girls kicked my door, stole my things, just to get a reaction out of me. The only child hated to come suddenly into a family where there were seventy members, and the spoiled one expected from me and my staff the same yielding treatment he had received from his fond parents.

The spoiled child usually gets far too much money to spend. I have often writhed when I saw parents of low fees or no fees at all send their children pound notes to spend. The spoiled child never values anything: it is he who gets a new chromium-plated three-speed cycle and three weeks later leaves it out in the rain all night. What happens is that the spoiled child is often the unloved child, and the parents compensate for their lack of love by showering material gifts on him, just as a man who has been unfaithful to his wife will generously buy her a fur coat. Often, too, the spoiled child is the parent's second chance in life . . . I have made little of life because so many people thwarted me, but my son will have every chance to succeed where I failed. It is this psychology that makes a father who had no musical education send his son to learn to play the piano; that makes a mother who gave up a career for marriage send her daughter to learn ballet dancing, even when she is heavy of foot. It is this psychology that compels a million boys and girls to take up jobs that, left to themselves, they would never have taken up. The poor parent cannot help his feelings; it is very hard for a man who has built up a thriving motor business to find that his son wants to be an actor or a musician, and it often happens.

A sad case is that of the spoiled child whose mother does not want him to grow up. Motherhood is a job, but it is not a lifetime job, and every woman realises that, hence

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the often-heard remark of a mother about her baby: "She is growing up too quickly."

When the family leaves the nest the mother's job is finished, and this should be an argument for every married woman's having a trade or profession of her own that she can take up again. The nest from which the fledglings have flown is a lonely nest, and a poor mother should be sympathised with rather than condemned. Her maternal feeling is to keep her job as long as possible, and if in the process she over-protects her child, fearing its progress, her fault is a pardonable one. In a better civilisation such a mother would not exist. Today thousands of women have the dullest job on earth . . . preparing meals, washing dishes and clothes, dusting; they are unpaid housekeepers and their lives are drab. In many a country public-house the men object to a woman's entering the bar; the pub is their club where they get away from their women-folk. It will always be so in a patriarchal society, and women will go on suffering. And consequently the children will go on suffering too. They will over-value their children, or find them a burden added to the pot and pan life they live. They will over-value because they realise that a later life of pots and pans only will be a miserable one. The danger is a strong possessiveness about the children, an unwillingness to cut the navel-cord, and this is especially so when parents have ceased to love each other.

This brings up the question again: Is it better to divorce? It is the biggest question of all in family life. Marriage assumes that love is eternal, and nothing is eternal. In a society where love was free, not bound by conventional marriage ties and sex repressions, it is likely that couples would love each other for longer periods than they do now.

However pleasant a tie may be, it is a chain, and life

### THE SPOILED CHILD

chained is dangerous. In general it is better for children to have divorced parents than to live in the hell that a loveless home is. Every child needs both a father and a mother, but it is better to have one parent with some peace than have two in perpetual if disguised war. But divorce will not work miracles. Divorce is the end of a long period of misery, and the child has been brought up in this misery atmosphere, and no external solution will completely undo the mischief that has been engrained. It sounds a pessimistic thing to say, but it is the truth. The spoiled child, using the word spoiled in any sense we like, is the product of a spoiled society in which clinging to life takes the place of loving life. The question: How can we make the Jones family happy? cannot be answered. The larger question we must try to answer. . . . How can we make humanity more intent on love and friendship and charity than on atom bombs, politics, punishment, discipline, in a word, hate? The Jones family is important because it is producing a generation of young Joneses who will hand on the evil to *their* children. I could give a hundred examples of spoiled children, and the illustrations would not help progress one little bit. The only contribution I can give is my work with children, and I can only do that work because a few parents realise the misery of the world, and are resolved to give their children the chance to face life more bravely and more happily than they themselves did. I used to think, in my innocence, that Freudianism would lead the way to health. It stopped at talking and did not go on to action. . . . Say what you like, cough up your complexes, but do not do what you like; do not live out your complexes, sublimate them. Freudianism adapted itself to life's self-castration; it was accepted because it was not a danger to self-hating society. Over forty years

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ago Freud said that the basis of neurosis is repressed sex.

Since then we have had two bloody wars and a plethora of political universal hate. Today in Britain we still make religious instruction a part of State education, accepting the fact that religion is anti-sex. This sex business demands a chapter to itself; it really demands volumes, but only if writing and thinking lead to practice.

## C H A P T E R V I I I

### Sex

THE big sin in life is the sexual one. It is the basis of all negative attitudes to life, and I repeat that children who have no sex guilt never ask for religion or mysticism of any kind. Here I do not want to theorise about sex: I want to see whether we can kill the emotional pest in life by early education. I shall begin by showing the terrible, old way. When I was six my sister and I discovered each other's genitals, and naturally played with each other. Discovered by mother, we were severely thrashed, and I was locked in a dark room for hours, and then made to kneel down and ask forgiveness from God. It took me decades to get over that early shock, and indeed I sometimes wonder if I ever fully got over it. Millions had a similar experience, and millions today are having their whole natural love of life changed into hate and aggression because of such treatment. Millions today are being told that touching the genitals is bad or sinful or (in suburban areas) "rude." No wonder that Reich says that people react to

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life by armouring themselves with stiff, retracted muscles, and perverted psyches. Every child that has had a sex suppression has a stomach like a board. Watch a repressed child breathe and then look at the beautiful grace with which a kitten breathes. No animal has a stiff stomach, and no animal is self-conscious about sex or defecation . . . unless we give animals like dogs bad consciences about messing the floor.

What then can we do with children? From the earliest moment the child must be completely free to touch any and every part of its body, yet even here the emotional pest of society has its hateful power. A psychologist friend had to say to his son of four: "Bob, you must not play with your wee-wee when you are out among strange people, for they think it bad. You must do it only at home and in the garden." He and I talked about it; we both agreed that it is thus impossible to guard the child against the anti-life haters of sex. The only comfort is that when the parents are sincere believers in life, the child accepts the parental freedom and rejects the outside prudery, but all the same, the mere fact that a child of five learns that he cannot bathe in the sea without pants is enough to form some kind, if only a minor kind, of sex distrust.

Today there are many parents who make no ban on masturbation. They feel that it is a natural thing to do, and they know the dangers of suppressing it. Excellent. Fine. But some of these enlightened parents jib at the next step . . . heterosexuality. Some do not mind if their little boys have sex play with other little boys, but they stiffen with alarm if a small boy and girl have sex play. If my good, well-meaning mother had ignored the sex play of my year younger sister and me, our chances of growing up with some sanity towards sex would have been good. I wonder

how much impotency and frigidity date from the first interference of a heterosexual relationship. I wonder how much later homosexuality dates from the tolerance of homosex play and the forbidding of heterosex play.

The English Public School may be popular because it allows for the former while cutting out entirely the latter. I broke off here to ask Reich's opinion on this question. He pointed out that just as pornography is the safety-valve of moralism, so homosexual play is the safety-valve of sex repression. The "sin" of life is the heterosexual act with its superlatively joyous orgasm. The homosexual play bypasses this danger, hence the fear of co-education and the acceptance of homosexuality, which is masturbation at the next stage. Heterosexual play in childhood is the royal road to a healthy, balanced adult sex life.

Some parents will accept heterosexual play in childhood, and at adolescence put on the bridle. When children have had no moralistic training in sex they reach a healthy adolescence, not a promiscuous one, as the moralists fear. I made a point of asking half a dozen mothers of girls of sixteen and seventeen, mothers who had not suppressed their daughters' sex: "Do you think that your girl should have a sex life if she wants to?" Only two said yes. The reasons given by the others were interesting. "She might regret it later when she falls in love in earnest." "She is too young." "I'm scared lest she should become pregnant." "She might get in with the rotten type of man."

I know that adolescent sex life is not practical politics today. I know that I can write giving my opinion that it is the right way to tomorrow's health, bodily and psychic, for Reich has convinced me that cancer is a disease of sex repression, as most other somatic diseases possibly are. I can write it, but if in my school I approved of my adolescent

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pupils sleeping together, my school would be in great danger of suppression by the authorities, so that I was a little smug in writing that Freudianism advocates saying what you like but not doing what you like. My school, however, is a very small item in human life, and I am thinking to the long tomorrow when society will have realised how dangerous sex repression is. Reich holds that society will realise it only when it knows the terrible price in human disease anti-life repression demands, when in despair humanity turns to stop the ravages of cancer and tuberculosis and all the other life-destroying processes. Reich is proving biologically what others have guessed. Thirty years ago Homer Lane said that moralist training in hate of the body was the cause of disease. Groddeck said something like that, too. Reich's importance is that he is in the position to prove it. Moralistic training not only warps the thinking process; it enters structurally into the body itself, armouring it literally with stiffness in posture and contraction of pelvis. I am not qualified to interpret Reich's new biophysics and Orgone theory. I can only say that the study of his books makes it impossible to read works on psychoanalysis. To me his books are of the utmost importance because I had spent many years studying psychology, hoping to find the salvation of mankind. I failed. I am not such a fool as to see in Reich a new Messiah; what I find in him is a new approach to the problem of human misery, an approach that gives me new encouragement to go on with my job of aiming to produce children who will not be neurotic. I know that one generation proves nothing; I do not expect every Summerhill pupil to be unneurotic, for who can be complex-free in this society? What I hope for is that in generations to come this beginning of freedom from

artificial sex taboos will ultimately fashion a life-loving world.

I turn to sex instruction. If the child's questions are answered truthfully and without inhibition on the part of the parents, sex instruction becomes part of natural childhood. The pseudoscientific method is bad. . . . I know a youth who was "taught" sex in this way, and he claims that he blushes when someone uses the word pollen. The factual truth about sex is of course important, but more important is the emotional content. Doctors know all about the anatomy of sex, but they are not better lovers than the South Sea Islanders; most likely they are not nearly so good. The child is not so interested in daddy's statement that he puts his wee-wee into mother's wee-wee, as to why he does it. The child who has been allowed his own sex play will not need to ask why. I am all for some nudity in the home, a necessary part of sex knowledge, but I realise that the cult of nudism can be a new form of sex repression. "See. Sex doesn't matter." I glance now at the results of a wrong sex education in home and school.

Bed-wetting. Undoubtedly many cases are due to sex repression. The sexual organ, that must not be touched by day, has its own form of energy discharge by night. Enuresis often lasts until puberty. The tendency in a child is to go back to an earlier form of satisfaction when a form is suppressed, and it can only be guessed that the suppression of masturbation sends the child back to bed-wetting, that is to an infantile stage of development. In the days when I gave psychological treatment, enuresis was always the worst failing to cure, and indeed I failed more often than I cured. To cure stealing was comparatively easy, but bed-wetting was deeply sunk in the personality. It was too

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overdetermined, and it was psychology plus the somatic, the first chronic disease so to speak. The cure may lie in Reich's Orgonotherapy technique, but I do not know, and I am much more interested in the prevention of enuresis than its cure. Some doctors claim that it is often due to purely physical causes like acidity or bladder trouble. All I know is that I have never seen a case that was consistently one of enuresis; Bill would wet his bed at home but not at school, or vice versa: Jane would begin to wet her bed a week before she went home for vacation. I am almost certain that a child, given no sex guilt, will not become a bed-wetter.

Stealing. This is generally a sign of lack of love, and it can be treated only by giving out love to the victim. Hence I reward a young thief by giving him or her sixpence for stealing. The reward means to the child: I am loved, approved of. Sooner or later the stealing ceases, for the love that was stolen symbolically in the form of money or goods is now given freely by the teacher. That is the simple case: it is more complicated when the stealing denotes a lack of parental love, and at the same time a surfeit of parental prohibitions about sex. In this category comes kleptomania, the uncontrollable reaching out of the hand for something forbidden—masturbation. This kind of stealing has the best prognosis when the parents realise their blunder, and begin again, telling the child frankly that they were wrong in their suppressions. Teacher alone can seldom cure it, and that is an argument for the close association between school and home, assuming, of course, that the teacher is not a moralist and life hater. The best person to remove a Verbot is he or she who originally made it. Here I am not concerned with methods of cure; all I want to do is to impress on the parents of thieving children,

that they must first of all examine themselves, trying to find out what treatment of theirs made the child dishonest. They bark up the wrong tree when they blame wicked companions, gangster films, lack of parental control because daddy was away in the army. These will of course help to determine a method of delinquency; they will have no effect whatsoever on the child brought up naturally about sex. The primary cause lies probably in the first weeks of life, when the hands were firmly taken from the genitals.

Destructiveness. This means hate in action, symbolic murder. It is not confined to children; those householders whose houses were occupied by the military during the war, learned that soldiers are much more destructive than children, naturally, for their job is destruction. Creation, life: destruction, death. So that the destructive child is anti-life. I am trying to beware of making things too simple, of saying that every blemish in a child is "nothing but" perverted sexuality. Destructiveness has many components . . . sometimes jealousy of a brother or sister better loved than the destroyer; sometimes rebellion against all limiting authority; sometimes only curiosity to "see what's inside." The main factor is not the actual destruction but the repressed hate inside, the hate that, given the circumstances, will make a Gestapo sadist. This is a very vital question, for it deals with the sickness of the world where hate flourishes from the nursery to the gallows. Love there is of course, lots of love, and if there were not we could only despair for life. That love is what every parent and educator should aim to discover and foster.

It is the love that the young thief had to begin with, love of life that was suppressed by parents who want to love and have their child love. Why Mr. Brown, friendly, hard-

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working, peaceful, allows the parsons and joy-killers of life to make him turn his son's love into hate is the greatest mystery of life. Religion slowly dies: I am told that two to three per cent of cinema-goers attend church. Good, yet the cinema-goers retain the hate of sex that religion taught, and atheists make problem children as easily as religious folks do.

The destructive child will last as long as our penal code, our police and armies, our disciplined schools obtain. But the individual Mr. Brown can decide that he, personally, will do nothing in the way of sex and love suppression to make little Jimmy Brown a problem child.

## C H A P T E R I X

### Religion

RECENTLY a woman visitor asked me: "Don't you believe in God?" I replied: "Which God? The one who made the universe or the one who says you must not masturbate or play games on Sunday?" I personally have nothing against the man who believes in a God; what I object to is the man who claims his God as an authority in restricting human growth and happiness. I have no contact with the rationalists who attack the idea of God from the intellectual aspect. To me they are fighting the wrong battle; the battle is not one between the believers and the non-believers; it is, or should be, the battle between the believers in human freedom and the believers in the suppression of human freedom in the name of God. The danger of religion to children is not that it converts their heads; rather is it that it makes sick their hearts. To every child God is the father, and the feeble little father of the home calls in his greater namesake to back up his little authority. Hence to most children God is someone to be

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feared, and the greater the fear of the Lord the greater the feeling of guilt about sex and dishonesty and what not.

When I answered the question about the best way to make the home more moral and religious, in the Brains Trust I mentioned previously the sound of fury from the audience arose when I said that in dealing with problem children the worst cases I ever had were from moral and religious homes. I spoke the utter truth. Religion as taught to children is anti-life and nothing will ever prove that that is not so. Timid non-religious parents often have their children baptised . . . "just in case there is a God," or perhaps more often because the family circle demands it. Why, the dear child must have a godfather and a godmother! So the cycle of anti-life revolves.

Apart from the hate of sex that religion gives, it is criminal to give a child mysticism; it affords the child an escape from reality for the wrong motives: We all escape from reality sometimes, else we should never read a novel or go to the pictures or drink a glass of whisky. But we escape with our eyes open and we come back, whereas the mystic is apt to live an escapist life, putting all his libido into his theosophy or Steinerism or Oxford Groupism, or what not. No child is a mystic unless life has been made too difficult for him. The day-dreaming child is likely to grow up into the mystic. Mysticism, however, is something negative, and the mystic is only harmful in the negative way of not facing reality. The bigger danger than that of mysticism is the danger of making a child a positive hater; of course, for if a child is taught that certain things are sinful, his love of life must be changed to hate. A young teacher in South Africa told me that if he went to a dance even on a week-night he would get the sack; an extreme case, I

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grant, yet the same fear of life is being driven into millions of children.

No parent has the right to teach the gospel of Original Sin. There never was original sin or sin of any kind: what we call sin is sickness, the result of ignorance and fear, and when children are free they never think of another child as being a sinner. In Summerhill if a child steals and is tried by a jury of its fellows, it is never punished for the theft; all that happens is that it is made to pay back the debt. Children unconsciously realise that stealing is sickness; they are little realists, and are far too sensible to postulate an angry God and a tempting Devil. Man made God in his own image, and free children, facing life eagerly and bravely, have no need to make any god at all.

Religion is an easy way. If a young Roman Catholic "sins" he confesses to his priest and the sin is washed out. The young convert to religion, swayed by the itinerant lay Hot Gospeller, casts his burden on the Lord; he "believes," and his path to glory is assured.

The believer in eternal life, for which there is no proof at all, meets personal grief with considerable alleviation . . . we shall meet again on the happy shore, while the non-believer has to face the painful realisation that death is the end, and there is no reunion. Spiritualism brings great comfort to bereaved families, and after a war finds many new adherents. I am no spiritualist, and I think that the "proofs" they give of existence after death are trite when they are not simply infantile. At the same time I see that Spiritualism is a much less dangerous religion than Christianity; it does not tell children they are sinners, that they will go to hell, that God is watching them even when they are under the bed-clothes. It does not say that if you

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masturbate the mediums will not be able to get in touch with you when you pass over. A Spiritualistic world would be safer for children than an R.C. world or a C. of E. world or a Calvinist world. The danger is that gradually this new religion will set up its own laws of suppression, for fundamentally it is afraid of life, running away from life, disparaging life as the preliminary to a fuller life beyond. Luckily I have never met a child who had even the faintest interest in spiritualism.

The Oxford Group is a great danger to youth. It perpetuates the original sin fallacy by postulating an external power for good. It is dangerous because of its hail-fellow-well-met, boisterous, breezy, superficial optimism. Its appeal to the middle and commercial classes is sinister . . . not a few of its members testify that since joining the Group their incomes have increased. Landau wrote a chapter on Buchman and his heading was: The Man Whose God Is a Millionaire. The religion tries to minimise the after death aspect, saying that God is here now, offering "guidance" to all who ask. It makes much of the public confessional, and a prosperous citizen will get up and say: "I have something to confess, something that has worried me for years. *I cheated in an exam when I was nine.*" So far I have not read of any grouper getting up and saying that he masturbates, or picks his nose, or seduces the girl in the flower shop, but I admit that I have never been to a Group meeting, and judge only by what is published. Groupism is full of idealism . . . perfect truth, perfect honesty, perfect commercial faith. The perfection ideal is fatal to all children . . . if it comes from the other fellow outside.

Truth, perfect or semi-perfect, must come from inside, and it can come from inside only if the child is free inside, and no Buchman can give a child inner freedom.

Reich says that every man is right in some way, that the religionists are right in their own circle of limits. That is a necessary factor to consider, for it helps not at all if we condemn mysticism and religion without understanding why they are there. Reich holds that they are the result of humanity's disillusionment in a mechanistic age with a mechanistic philosophy, an anti-life philosophy. To me, that is another way of saying that man's head has rushed ahead of his emotions. We have telephones and refrigerators and cars invented by heads, and crimes and wars made by emotions. Instead of asking himself why his emotions go haywire, man runs away from them, or rather he bundles them into present or future mysticism, just as the negro slaves sang of a happy land where they would have no more toil, where they rested for ever on Abraham's bosom. Mysticism and religion mean: life is a failure; man alone is not good enough. That is why free children have no use for any "ism": they do not feel that life is a failure, for no one has taught them to say nay to life. Life abundant would kill all religion and mysticism, all irrational thinking and behaviour. But there can be no life abundant so long as parents hand on their fear of life and pleasure to their children.

Some people see the salvation of humanity in the economic system. Some of my Communist friends really believe that a Marxist world will automatically cure all evils: under Communism there will be no neurosis, no complexes, no need for an external moralist called God. I do not know what they think of Russia's reinstatement of the Church after a period of anti-godism, or of the Russian abolition of co-education. Certainly religion is closely connected with the economic system. My Communist friend, Leslie Morton, author of *The People's History of England*,

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showed me that God changes as the system changes: in a pastured land he was the Gentle Shepherd; in warlike times he was the God of Battles; when trade flourished he was the God of Justice, weighing out justice and mercy. Today I fancy, when man is so mechanically creative, God is Wells's "Great Absentee"; a God of Creation is not wanted in an age that can make its own atom bombs. Hence the tendency to lessen God's importance in such a religion as Spiritualism. The medium does not talk with God or even the angels; she talks to your sister Mary: Sir Oliver Lodge's son Raymond is not sitting at the feet of God; he is working with things that interested him down here.

A Marxist world with all its elaboration of machines and schools and colleges will still require an outside God because machines and schools and colleges will not touch what, for want of a better term, we may call the spiritual side of life. The machine age is also the human machine age. The simple truth is that we, with our radios and aeroplanes, are farther away from real living than the Central African native is. True, he also has his religion, born of fear, but he is not impotent in love nor homosexual nor inhibited. His life is primitive, but he says yea to it in essentials.

Like the savage, we seek religion because of fear. A bull has more courage than a castrated ox. We are a castrated humanity. No brave humanity would suffer the existence of moralists and prisons and wars. We can teach our children religion only after we have castrated them, unmanned them for ever.

I have had in my time many a case of a child ruined by religious training. To quote such cases would not help anyone. Any Salvationist or Grouper can quote cases by the

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yard, cases that were "saved" by being washed in the blood or giving oneself to God's "guidance." Postulating that man is a sinner and needs to be redeemed, the religionists are right. All I ask of parents is that they should take a wider view, one far outside the home, seeking to foster a civilisation that will not have sin thrust on it at birth, thus eliminating any need for redemption or uplift or eternal life.

## C H A P T E R X

### Fear of the Future

PARENTAL fear of the future affords a poor prognosis for the health of children. It has increased since the breaking out of the second world war, and, oddly enough, shows itself in the desire that children should learn more. The kind of parent who, before the war, was content to leave Willie to learn to read when he wanted to, now nervously fears that Willie will be a failure in life unless he is pushed. Summerhill fees are, alas, less than those of most other "progressive" schools (I hate the word), and what I call compromise schools flourish today while we have to worry about making fees balance post-war prices of food and material and wages. Parents who might have sent their child to Neill now send him or her to X who has a school with pleasant apparent freedom, where the pupils have to attend lessons. The urgency of war danger in the world (and indeed it is alarmingly urgent) robs parents of their patience; they cannot wait as they used to do, cannot wait for the child to go at his own rate. "If my

son cannot read at twelve, what chance has he of success in life?" "If he cannot pass Matric at sixteen, what is there for him but an unskilled job?" So let us send him to a school where he will learn and learn rapidly. Post-war fear has reinstated learning as the criterion of education even among progressive parents. This worries me, for if I have any special talent, it is that I have a long patience; I can wait for years watching a child make little or no progress, never doubting that in the end he will succeed in life.

A few illustrations may be helpful. Tom came to Summerhill at the age of five. He left at seventeen without having in all these years gone to a single lesson. He spent much time in the workshop making things. His father and mother trembled with apprehension about his future. He never showed any desire to learn to read, but when he was nine I found him in bed one night reading *David Copperfield*.

"Hullo," I said, "who taught you to read?"

"I taught myself."

Some years later he came to me asking: "How do you add a half and two-fifths?" and I told him, asking if he wanted to know any more. "No thanks," he said. He got work in a film studio as a camera boy, spent the war in an army film unit. When he was learning his job I happened to meet his boss at a dinner party, and I asked how he was doing.

"The best boy we ever had," he said. "He never walks; he runs, and at weekends he is a damned nuisance, for he won't stay away from the studio on Saturdays and Sundays."

Another instance, again of a boy who would not learn to read. No one could teach him; even when he asked for a reading lesson there was some hidden obstruction that

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kept him from distinguishing between *b* and *p*, *l* and *k*. He left school at seventeen without the ability to read. To-day he is an expert toolmaker loving his job so much that his favourite conversation is about metalwork. He can read now but so far as I know reads mainly mechanical and psychological works and articles. I do not think he has ever read a novel, yet he speaks perfect grammatical English with good phrasing, and his general knowledge is remarkable. An American visitor, knowing nothing of his story, said to me: "What a clever lad that is."

Of course the philistine can say: "Humph, so you call a camera man and an instrument maker successes in life!" My own criterion of success is ability to work joyfully and to live positively: it is better to be a happy carpenter than to be a well-salaried business manager who hates his work.

I have mentioned two boys. Now for a girl, a nice, pleasant girl who went to lessons without much interest. Her mind was not academic and for a long time I wondered what she would do with life. When she left at sixteen I am sure that any Inspector of Schools would have pronounced her a badly-educated or half-educated child. To-day she is demonstrating a new kind of cookery in London, highly skilled at her work, and happy in it. I could give many instances of late development succeeding in the end.

That is why I cannot ask the Ministry of Education for recognition as an "efficient" school. Not being recognised is a handicap. For instance, the Army Surplus people were offering wonderful bargains to schools, radio parts, electrical devices, sold in hundredweight lots. I applied for my share and was told that only "recognised" schools could buy. I cannot seek recognition because I do not accept the standards of the Ministry of Education. Many an Inspector

of Schools would have examined the three pupils I have just mentioned and would have declared the school inefficient because they could not show the standard of Three R's progress one expects in a State school at—say—the age of eleven. It is all very sad. State schools get the wood and metal and paper they require, while all the wood I can get is the usual householder's pound's-worth per month. In the bad winter of 1947 my school had no coke and therefore no hot water for six weeks, while the local government schools had heaps of fuel. Whether recognition would mean more material and fuel I do not know, but if I had to fit my pupils into a State time-table system, I would give up and take to market gardening.

It would be foolish to argue that parental worry about learning makes problem children. The boy who has to attend lessons is not likely to react by stealing or smashing windows. No, not problem children, but anxious children, for the anxiety of the parent is contagious. Sometimes things work the other way. In Summerhill the only pupils who have passed Matric or School Certificate have been those who did so off their own bats; I have never seen a child pass whose parents had kept nagging him or her about learning, and in one case I had to tell a father that his only chance of having his boy pass School Certificate was to tell him that he didn't care whether he passed or not. My view is that a child is innately wise and realistic, and if left to himself without adult suggestion of any kind, will develop as far as he is capable of developing, and, logically my school is a place in which people who have the innate ability and wish to be scholars will be scholars, while the children who are only fit to sweep the streets will sweep the streets. But we have not produced a scavenger so

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far, nor do I write this snobbishly, for I had rather see a school produce a happy scavenger than a neurotic doctor or professor.

Parental fear of the future is dangerous when it expresses itself in suggestion that is near to bribery. . . . "When you learn to read, darling, Daddy will give you a bicycle." That way leads to a ready acceptance of our profit-seeking civilisation, but I am glad to say that I have seen more than one child prefer illiteracy to a new shining cycle. A variant of this form of bribery is the one that seeks to touch the child's emotions . . . "Mummy will be very unhappy if you are always at the bottom of the class." Both methods by-pass the child's interests; if Mary learns to read or count it should be because of her interest in the subject, not the new cycle or the pleasing of Mummy. Parents will not learn that you cannot compel interest. One mother told her son that if he stopped sucking his thumb she would give him a radio set. What an unfair conflict to give any child! Thumb-sucking is an unconscious act, beyond the control of will. The child may make a brave conscious effort to stop the habit, only, like the miserable masturbator, to fail again and again, thus acquiring a mounting load of guilt and weakness and misery. Incidentally we should recognise that "we do not form bad habits by indulging; we form them by refusing to indulge." (Homer Lane.)

The parents who worry most about the future of their children are usually those who feel that they themselves have failed in life. And when this worry is added to identification of parent with child, mischief is brewing. I have mentioned how a mother who wanted to be an artist or a dancer, and whose career was stopped by marriage and household work, insisted that her daughter should learn

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to act or to dance. That is a very real danger, especially since it is nearly always an unconscious identification . . . my child shall live the life that I was prevented from living. Here I write of middle-class parents, and, because my work is with children of the middle class, I am apt to forget that the great majority of parents are not middle or upper class. That is why some Left folks say that Summerhill is of little importance because it is a class school. Right, it is, and has to be because it has no financial support other than school fees. This brings up, in parenthesis, an important question. An American visitor, a professor of psychology, criticised my school on the grounds that it is an island, that it is not fitting into a community centre, not part of a larger social unit. My answer is this: if I were to found a school in a small town, attempting to make it part of the community, what would happen right away? Out of a hundred parents, what percentage would approve of free choice in attending lessons? How many would approve of a child's right to masturbate? From the start I should have to compromise with what I believe to be truth . . . and I am a poor compromiser. . . . Teachers from Palestine have told me of the wonderful community centres they have there, where the school is part of the community, a community whose primary need is hard work. Children of ten, one teacher told me, weep if, as a punishment, they are not allowed to dig the garden. If I had a child of ten who wept because he was forbidden to dig potatoes, I should wonder if he were mentally defective. Childhood is playhood, and any community system that ignores that truth is educating in a wrong way. Community schooling is in great danger of encouraging the old tradition that the adult knows best what is good for the child, and, to me, the Palestine method is sacrificing young life to economic ne-

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cessity. It may be necessary: if I were wrecked on an uninhabited island with some children of ten I should have to demand that they fetch wood and draw water, but I would not dare to call that ideal community living. Children's work should involve play all the time, unless we approve of the present state of things when millions who never had enough play, watch football and cricket and baseball, play eternal card games, rubberneck at society weddings and royal processions.

Summerhill is an island . . . "an island that likes to be visited," as Barrie phrased it. It has to be an island, because its parents live in towns miles part, in countries overseas. Since it is impossible to collect all the parents together in the town of Leiston, Suffolk, Summerhill cannot be a part of Leiston's cultural and economic and social life. I hasten to add that the school is not an island to Leiston town; we have many contacts with local people, and the relationship on both sides is a friendly one. Yet fundamentally we are not a part of the community. I would never think of asking the editor of the local newspaper to publish successes of old pupils. We play games with the town children, but our education aims are widely apart. Not having any religion, we have no connection with religious bodies in the town. If Summerhill were part of the town community centre it would have to give religious teaching to its pupils.

No, Summerhill is an island and has to be an island. The outside world comes in boats, looks, learns (I hope), disapproves (seldom) and rows away again, carrying something valuable with it (I hope again). The school is widely known in Scandinavia from whence we have many visitors; my books have been translated into Japanese, and teachers in Tokio meet to discuss our methods. A headmaster from

the Sudan this summer told me that Summerhill is of great interest to teachers there, and an Egyptian teacher said the same of his country. Excuse this bragging . . . I can balance it by laughing at myself, and realising my limitations as a thinker and philosopher and educationist. I am trying to show that I consider that the island way is the only one I can pursue without compromising on matters that would mean a selling of my soul.

I have the distinct feeling that my American friend did not realise what his criticism meant. I take it that it meant: Neill is only a rebel against society; his system can do nothing to weld society into a harmonious unit, cannot bridge the gulf between child psychology and the social ignorance of child psychology, between life and anti-life, school and home. My answer is that I am not a saver of society: I cannot convince society that it is necessary for it to rid itself of hate and punishment and mysticism. True I write and say what I think of society, but if I tried to reform society by and large by action, society would kill me as a public danger. If, for example, I tried to form a society in which adolescents would be free to have their own natural love life, I should be ruined if not imprisoned as an immoral seducer of youth. Hating compromise as I do I have to compromise here, realising that my primary job is not the reformation of society. Being a human person Summerhill means more to me than does society, and I shall remain an islander. Island youth has to row back to the mainland to live and work, coming back for short spells to a sincere freedom, yet having no desire to stay for ever. When I offered an old girl of nineteen a job as house-mother she sighed and answered: "I'd love it, but I can't take the job; I'd feel I was going back in life, escaping. If I came back I'd feel Summerhill was a failure for me."

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Only a neurotic would want to return to stay on an island, a thought which makes me think that I must be the biggest neurotic of all, for I stay and love staying.

Since writing the above I have discovered that I misunderstood the professor's criticism. He meant that my old pupils do not leave school with a burning desire to reform the evils of society, and he instanced what happened in his university where the students got into groups to do social work. One group took up the question of a negro's being barred from a swimming bath. I have no direct knowledge of my old pupils' getting into groups to reform society. A few have agitated in their towns for sex and birth control clinics. A few have gone into political groups, in the main sons and daughters from Communist homes. I think that most old pupils are primarily concerned with their jobs, that is, they take an individualistic attitude. The only comment I have to make is that they all lost some years of their lives in the stagnant uncreativity of War No. 2, so that some are training for trades and professions seven or eight years too late. I do not say this as a defence, only as a possible explanation. Personally I do not expect to see a keen desire to reform society in adolescents and post-adolescents.

Too often have I seen young revolutionists who were so eager to work for humanity that they forgot to work for their profession. . . . I have had a few on my staff at various times. So it may be that Summerhill pupils will first make themselves secure and efficient in their work, and then set out to help humanity. I do not know. I am quite content to think that they will not make their own children anti-life by suppressing their natural sexuality, and possibly they will do more good that way than they would do by talking at meetings and preaching freedom.

The awkward question occurs to me. . . . Is the young

reformer a neurotic who projects his individual wish for reform of himself onto society? If so, will the balanced youth simply do his life work and leave reforms alone? If he does the politician will be abolished and Reich's Work Democracy will be established. One thing I can say about my old pupils is that they do not refuse responsibility in their work: freedom and confidence go together. Few if any of them will make money, but they may ultimately make history.

A long parenthesis in a chapter on parental fear of the future. Pardon.

Working-class parents have a fear of the future that is grounded on economic insecurity. Families that depend on the earning power of sons and daughters have a natural fear here. Moreover our social system with its snobbery and white collar jobs naturally makes poor workers anxious that their children should not have to toil and drudge as they do. When I was a boy at my father's village school in Angus, many gentleman's servants, butlers, grooms, gamekeepers saved to send their children to the university. They were determined to make them ladies and gentlemen. Some Labour M.P.s, I am told, send their sons to Public Schools if they can. Fine. The right thing to do in a society that judges you by your accent, where folks chuckle at the story of the Labour Cabinet Minister who said to Lord Birkenhead: "Birkenhead, I've got an 'ell of an 'ead; what can I do for it?" Birkenhead replied: "What about a couple of aspirates?" Apocryphal no doubt, but summing up an " 'ell of a lot" of education.

I cannot see any evidence that the ambition of poor parents makes for problemicity forming. It sometimes makes for unhappiness in the rising generation, as when, for example, a young lady teacher walking with her sweetheart, a

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doctor, met her father in the street and introduced him as "our shoemaker." Poor relations are often objects of shame: I know it well, for my father was the son of a coal miner, and his brothers were working men who visited us with hankies round their necks, speaking broad dialect, and making us, when we were old enough to be conscious of it, ashamed to be seen with them. It is a social rather than a psychological problem, and so long as we have a class society parents will want their children to rise, and gulfs will form. If the idea of taking poor children into the big Public Schools comes to fruition, the clever proletariat will become class conscious in a snob way; boys will come home to poor districts with a class accent, and their abilities will be lost to their original class. Years ago a philanthropist wanted to pay the fees of a problem boy from a London slum. I refused to take him on the grounds that he would acquire middle-class manners, speech, a taste for middle-class diet, and he would return each vacation to his ignorant, humble parents and feel miserably divided. I think now I was wrong, for it was a special case where the father was a drunkard; I think I exaggerated the social danger, but have a vague memory of some snag in the proposal . . . the benefactor was to pay for only a year or two.

Parents are wrong in forcing their own tastes on to a child. The common notion is that a child is too young to understand what will be of benefit in later life. So they send Jenny to music lessons thinking that when she is twenty she will thank them for their foresight. Britain is full of indifferent players or music haters because of compulsory early training in instrumental music. It is the most frequent question asked by Summerhill visitors. . . . Won't the child turn round and blame the school for not making it learn maths or music? It is generally music or

maths or both. The answer is that young Freddy Beethoven and Tommy Einstein will refuse to be kept away from their respective spheres.

The function of the child is to live its own life, not the life that its anxious parents think it should follow, nor the purpose of the educator who thinks he knows best what is best. Where all this interference and guidance on the part of adults ends is in a generation of robots. I once heard a girl of eleven say when her mother wanted to send her to my school: "I don't want to go, and I'll tell you why; I want my life to be organised for me. It would be too difficult, for it would all have to depend on me." At the age of eighteen when I reminded her of her words, after she had spent seven years at a strict school, she exclaimed: "Don't. I've kicked myself a thousand times as a congenital idiot." You cannot make children learn music or anything else without in some degree or other converting them into will-less adults. You fashion them into accepters of the status quo, a good thing for a society that needs obedient sitters at dreary desks, standers in shops, mechanical catchers of the 8.30 from Wimbledon—a society, in short, that is carried on the shabby shoulders of the little man. It is not very satisfying to realise that our home and school education leads to a drab life for the majority of people. Oh, yes, shops and dull desks are necessary; what is unnecessary is the deadness of people who hate their counters and desks and pits and offices, who have to seek relief for their starved emotions in trite cinema films, dog-racing, picture newspapers, and Sunday papers of sensation and crime.

Parental fear of the future is in the main a monetary one. A man may fear that his son will sink to the low-paid level of the dustman, but he will be unlikely to fear that his son will sink to the level of loving sentimental Hollywood

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films. I have seen poor boys rise to be rich merchants or builders or contractors. They built big houses and bought sumptuous cars, but their level of culture was exactly the same as that of their fellows who remained ploughmen and masons. Security is bought but at a high price . . . the sacrifice of all that is deeply significant in life.

Sometimes in religious homes fear of the future is unconsciously linked up with fear of the future after death. Psychoanalysts claim that the examination dream is often the final examination at the Golden Gate. Let me break off here to tell a story.

Once a week I have a spontaneous acting class. One night I sat down on a chair and said: "I am St. Peter at the Golden Gate. You be folks trying to get in. Carry on." They came up with all sorts of reasons for getting in. One girl came from the opposite direction and pleaded to get out, but the star turn was a boy of fourteen who went by me whistling, hands in pockets.

"Hi," I cried, "you can't go in there."

He turned and looked at me.

"Oh," he said, "you are a new man on the job, aren't you?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You don't know who I am, do you?"

"Who are you?" I asked.

"God," he said, and went whistling into heaven.

Irrelevant to the subject, but a good story. Whether the examination dream denotes fear of the final examination is not very important. That fear does exist in many people, and that may be the reason why in my native Scotland the Leaving Certificate exam is held in so much esteem, for Calvinism still obtains there.

No one, who in childhood has been threatened with a

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fear of an after-life in hell can possibly be free from a neurotic anxiety about security in this life, even if he sees rationally that a heaven above and a hell below are infantile phantasies founded on nothing but human hopes and fears. The emotional warping one gets in infancy is fixed for ever. The fear of the future is one with the fear of the present. Saving up for sickness or old age is normal, healthy; worrying oneself to death about possible poverty in old age is neurotic. They say of a celebrated film star that when he sees a tramp pick up a cigarette end from the gutter, he shivers at the thought that one day he may return to that wretched stage.

Healthy, free children do not fear the future; they anticipate it gladly, and their children in their turn will face life without the sick fear of tomorrow. I do not contend that fear of the future is always neurotic. We are all fearing the Third World War, scared that atomic energy will annihilate us all. That is not fear founded on phantasy. Humanity always chooses the death way; it follows a Jesus only in name, but it follows a Hitler or a Napoleon in reality. It is our anti-life propensity that makes the atomic bomb so alarming.

## Money, and Clothes

PERHAPS because I am a Scot I have a complex about money. I can get angry if a shopkeeper charges me three-pence too much, yet when a parent defaults to the tune of £300 I do not get angry, and I can write a cheque for £100 with ease, whereas if I had to pay out a hundred pound notes, or worse still golden sovereigns, it would pain my heart. Unpaid debts and cheques are as it were abstract things; a cheque is phantasy money, a scrap of paper. Hence I am not the fellow to write very wisely about money. At the same time I can take a fairly objective view of parents and children in their money relationship. Money to most children has a love symbolism: Uncle Tom gives me sixpence, Aunt Margaret a shilling, therefore Auntie loves me more than Uncle does. Parents unconsciously know this and too often spoil the child by giving too much. The unloved child very often gets the biggest postal order, not always of course, but certainly too often. Again, Stekel held that money often symbolised excre-

ment, and pointed out that burglars sometimes defecated on the carpet after robbing the safe, moral burglars who wanted to leave something of infantile value as payment for their theft. He held that the first act of infant creation—excrement—was of the greatest moment, and held that a phrase like *Filthy Lucre* derived from that creation. On the other hand, modern parents allowing babies self regulation say that they seem to attach little importance to their excrement, and, in any case, what does it matter? Telling a miser that he is hoarding symbolic faeces will not make him a philanthropist. Therefore let us stick to real money which is complicated enough without translating it into something else. The main consideration is that it is a standard of value. I travelled third class in the *Queen Elizabeth* to New York. The arrangements were good, the food excellent, the stewards capable and kindly. I felt my tourist class was first rate if not first class. The money value had to appear of course: we tourist class had to be on the ship in Southampton by 11 a.m., while the first class came on in the afternoon. In New York the first class get off quickly, while I hung about waiting in queues for officials from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. in the sweltering August heat. By the way, the U.S.A. Medical Officer gave me a card to give to the Immigration Officer, saying that he had examined Mr. Neill (which he hadn't) and found him suffering from senility, and I naturally want to believe that in U.S.A. senility does not mean a dribbling, second-childhood.

What I am trying to say is that none of us can escape the money valuation in life. It is forced upon us everywhere; we sit in the stalls or the gallery or midway in the pit, and our children go to Eton or the Council School or midway to Summerhill . . . speaking financially only. Money values are a danger to every one of us. A mother will cry, half in

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jest: "I wouldn't sell my child for all the gold in the world!" and five minutes later will spank her child for breaking a Woolworth cup. It is the money value that is at the root of so much discipline in the home . . . don't touch that, that having cost money. Children are balanced against money, but only children, not adults. My mother used to spank us if we broke a plate but when father broke a plate it did not seem to matter . . . it was just an accident.

Problem parents give their children much anxiety about money values. Far too often have I heard a child cry in dismay: "I've dropped my watch and broken it. What will Mummy say? I'll be scared to tell her." Occasionally one sees the opposite mechanism. In the days when I took problems I more than once had a boy or girl who broke things deliberately as a hate reaction against home. . . . "I'll make my parents, who don't love me, pay for it. Coo, won't they be wild when Neill sends in the bill!" Or in a few cases the motive was home-sickness. . . . "If I run up big bills for breakages, Daddy will take me home."

Some parents send their children too much, some too little. I am referring to parents with children at boarding schools. This has always been a problem to me, one that I cannot solve. Our pupils get their age in pennies as pocket-money each Monday, but some get extra money sent by post, while others get little or nothing. Even in schools that have a school uniform which theoretically makes every child equal in clothes quality, rich girls show their wealth in their silk stockings and wraps.

It is chiefly in the matter of clothes that parents show their money complexes. I learned this before the post-war austerity made life miserable with coupons and scarcity. I once had a very bad thief who was cured after four years'

hard work and patience. He left at seventeen. His mother wrote: "Bill has arrived. Two pairs of his socks are missing; can you please see that they are sent on?" Children have no interest in clothes, but the child whose parents are neurotic about clothes soon acquires a complex himself. He fears to climb a tree lest he rip his trousers. Children shed their clothes anywhere and everywhere, discarding a sweater and forgetting where it was parked, so that if I walk over our grounds on a summer evening I can pick up an assortment of shoes and jerseys. When the assortment is left at the beach the situation is not so good.

Children who do not go to boarding schools have the opinion of neighbours to contend with. Think of the thousands of children who are sacrificed to that abomination we name Sunday Clothes. You see them solemnly walking out in stiff collars and white dresses, fearful to kick a ball or climb a gate. That idiocy is fortunately dying out.

Parents of boarding-school children sometimes have a jealousy motive in their concern about clothes. Sometimes it denotes an over-valuation of the child, often a corollary to an under-valuation of the husband. Sometimes there is a hint of jealousy of the housemother who looks after the child in school. I have had mothers visiting their children and going straight to their clothes cupboard with many a frown and a tut tut, suggesting that the housemother was inadequate. Such a mother usually has an anxiety neurosis about her child, one that is really subjective; an anxiety about clothes means an anxiety about learning and everything else.

To return to money in general, it is better to give a child too little than too much. The parent who slips a boy of eleven a pound note is being unwise, unless the gift has a special object like buying a lighting set for a cycle. Too

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much money spoils a child's values, and I feel that children get too much these days. They get beautiful expensive cycles which they do not take care of, radio sets, toys that cost much but are uncreative. I suppose it is prejudice on my part, for when I was a boy we children got very little, and had to wait for a cycle until we had earned money to buy it. Anyway we valued what we had acquired with difficulty. I notice that small children do not value money. Our five-year-olds drop their pennies or sometimes throw them away. This suggests that it is wrong to teach children to save. The home savings bank asks too much from the child: it says to him: "Think of the morrow," when the child is at the stage when only today matters. It means nothing to a child of seven that he has seven pounds in the bank, especially if he suspects that his parents will one day draw it out to buy him clothes.

Money handicaps a child's phantasy life. To give a child a six-guinea yacht robs him of all the creative joy of fashioning a boat out of a chunk of wood. We often see a little girl value highly the rag doll she made herself, scorning the elaborate expensive well-dressed commercial doll that sleeps or quacks. Toys should primarily be creative.

The question of earning money is a complicated one. Children play at work and work at play; they will spend hours labouring in a hot sun, digging a dugout without any ulterior motive, but they will not dig potatoes with any desire or pleasure. So that if we want children to work we ought to pay them for their work. We exploit children far too often. . . . "Marion, run down to the pillar-box with this letter." All children hate to be made use of. The average child dimly realises that he is fed and clothed without any effort on his part, and he feels it is his right, while he

realises that he has to do a hundred things that adults evade.

In Summerhill one of our community laws is that every child over twelve and every member of staff must do two hours work in the grounds weekly. The pay is a token one of threepence for two hours. If you do not work you are fined threepence. A few, staff included, are content to pay the fines, and of those who work most have their eyes on the clock. There is no play component in the work and therefore it bores them. I sometimes wonder why they retain the law; they could rescind it by a vote.

A later note. The law has been rescinded by a majority vote. I proposed the abolition myself, saying that the law had come from the adults, and that the children had accepted it grudgingly. So that in this past summer the weeding has been done by some of the staff and a very few of the children.

## C H A P T E R X I I

### Parental Love

THE worst mother in the world is she who keeps asking her child: "Do you love your Mummy?" The question always implies a doubt, usually founded on the mother's guilty conscience about not giving the child enough love. The worst father in the world is he who demands gratitude from his children. Such parents demand what is not in the child's power to give. A small child cannot love; it can only wish to be loved. No child can be grateful, for his interest is in the thing given, not in the giver, but maybe I have a jaundiced view of gratitude having lost possibly £10,000 in bad debts in twenty-seven years.

Some parents want an outward and visible sign of child love. In my *Problem Child* (1926) I suggested that boarding schools with strict discipline are popular because the unhappy child comes home eagerly and gladly, and his reaction is taken by the parents as a proof of love of home and them. My parents see their children come home gladly and go back to school gladly, and that is what it should be. Ba-

bies suffer much from the desire for visible signs of love. "Kiss Grandma . . . say How do you do to the lady . . . say thank you to the kind gentleman." That is the beginning of training for the big, wide, insincere world where acting the hypocrite is so often advantageous professionally and commercially. It is also the beginning of estrangement from the parents, estrangement with a bad conscience later . . . "I know I should love the old folks but I can't. I don't feel at home in their presence." A wise mother will demand nothing from her baby; she will give all the time, and later the child will be able to give. The child spoiled by early demands it cannot by nature give, is in danger of being unable to give in adulthood. Of course, for its early giving was ordered and artificial. The child has its own intense life which it should be free to live without having to be a little hypocrite in order to please fathers and mothers.

Mothers sometimes do not ask directly for proof of love; they ask by implication. "I have a headache; please be quiet," means: "If you love me you will show it by stopping that infernal row." That is cowardly; stopping a child's creative activities by introducing the personality of the mother is mean, dishonest.

In adulthood we find similar wrong demands for love. We all are familiar with the music-hall wife who says to her husband: "Do you love me?" He thunders: "You've asked that damned question sixty times this week. Of course I love you, you fat, stupid fool." The audience laughs because the incident touches their own fatuous seeking of proof of love. True love doesn't ask for proof, doesn't ask for anything. It gives. The marital question: "Do you love me?" may be the beginning of the end, because it really means: "Don't you love me any more?" a query that is put only when there are grounds for suspecting that love

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has flown out of the window. So with parent and child. It should be incredible that any mother who spanks her child or any father who roars at his son should expect love or gratitude or respect. Such parents invariably have to face the unhappy time when they see their children estrange themselves from them, too often with an obvious hate reaction. This phase usually comes in puberty, perhaps round about seventeen, and it may last for a long time. Psychologically it means a natural attempt to break the bonds tying the young to the over-demanding old. And it breaks parental hearts. . . . "I have done everything for my son and see, see how he gets out of the room when I enter, see how he hides his innermost thoughts from me, how he lies to me when I ask him where he has been of an evening." Poor father. He does not realise that he asked for it, asked for it all the way from the year one of the child's life. The balanced parent who never demands love, respect, obedience, never has to have the misery of seeing his family feel uncomfortable in his presence. The self-regulated child of tomorrow will grow up with a real love for his parents; of course, for his parents will be human beings like himself, not foolish pretenders, acting the part of superior, all-knowing, faultless adults. One might say with much truth that the problem child is he who feels that the gulf between himself and his tin-god parents is a very wide one.

I hate to write it down, but a visitor from Mars might well conclude that children are more hated than loved. He would see spanking, hear scolding and demands for silence; he would see what looks like a valuation that treasures furniture more than it does children. He would conclude that problem children are made problems because of parental hate. And no doubt he would understand why that should be. It is tiresome to keep plucking one string,

boring for writer and reader to face repetition, nevertheless the truth must be rubbed in, that we cannot expect normal, balanced children to be reared by adults who in their childhood were damaged by their own authoritative parents. The greatest task of educator or parent is to keep his own personality out of dealing with children. Since we are all neurotic in one way or another, the danger is that too much of the parental or teachers' personality will give out hate. Jealousy of youth is a real thing. A girl of seventeen told me that at her girls' boarding school it was considered by the staff that breasts were shameful things that should be hidden by tight lacing. An extreme case no doubt, yet containing in exaggerated form a truth that we try to forget, that age, disappointed, repressed, hates youth because it is jealous of youth. I could not count the number of fathers I have known who hated their sons because of jealousy; these were the Peter Pan fathers who wanted mother love from their wives, hating the young rival and often beating him cruelly. I have seen many a mother who hated to see her daughter show all the freshness and beauty that she, the mother, had lost, usually mothers who had nothing to do in life, who lived in the past and day-dreamed of the conquests they had made at dances long ago. Today it has become a platitude to say that we hate in others what we hate in ourselves. It is true, and the self hate we got in our infancy becomes attached to our own infants, be we ever so willing to give them our love.

Possessive love is not good for children. It is most likely to arise in an unhappy home, the home where the sex life of the parents is unsatisfactory or non-existent. The wife of an impotent man or the husband of a frigid woman is apt to give out to the children a love that is too possessive, that is a strangulating love. Some of the worst mother fixations

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I have seen came from families where the man was impotent. Possessive love can and often leads to sadism. The possessed child hates its bonds while desiring them at the same time. The conflict sometimes appears as cruelty. Hate of the possessing mother is repressed and, as an emotion must always find some outlet, kicking the cat or striking his sister is an easier way than rebelling against Mother.

A danger is that a too-possessive mother reading this book may get a very bad conscience and cry in defence: "I can't help myself. I don't *want* to ruin my child. It's all very well to diagnose, but what is the remedy?" She is right. What is the remedy? Or indeed is there a remedy?

The question asks so much. What cure is there for a woman whose life is dull and full of fears for herself and her children? For a man who thinks that his cheeky son is the cat's whiskers? Worst of all what remedy is there when the parents are ignorant of what they are doing, and indignant at any suggestion that they are doing the wrong thing? I used to think that psychoanalysis was one way of curing. I have a greater faith in Reich's Orgone therapy but there is only one practitioner in Britain, and if there were ten thousand, most people could not afford to pay the fees. Today I have reached the sad conclusion that little can be done for the present generation, and that the most we can hope for is an increasing number of parents who realize, even if dimly, that the happiness and prosperity of their children depend on the degree of approval they give them. One does not require an expert knowledge of psychology to be on the child's side, the phrase Homer Lane used. Being on the side of the child is giving love to the child, not possessive love, not sentimental love, just behaving to the child in such a way that the child *feels you love him*. It can be done: I have done it for thirty years or more, and I am no genius,

no wonder: I am just an ordinary teacher, with a faith in original goodness, and an experience of hundreds of damaged victims of the wrong type of love. I know scores of parents who are on the side of their children, demanding nothing in return . . . and therefore getting a lot. They realise that children are not little adults, and when a son of ten writes: "Dear Mummy, Please send me two bob. Hop you are well love to daddy," they smile, knowing that that is what a child of ten writes if he is sincere. The wrong type of parent sighs at such a letter. . . . "The selfish little beast, always asking for something." The right parents of my school never ask how their children are getting along: they see for themselves. The wrong type keep asking me impatient questions. . . . Can he read yet? When is he ever going to be tidy? Does she ever go to lessons? It is all a matter of faith in children. Some have it; most haven't it. And if you do not have this faith the children feel it, and they feel that your love cannot be very deep, else you would trust them more.

In the school there cannot be love where fear or respect reign. You cannot love a man if he considers it his duty to give you lines or the cane for slackness or talking in class. You cannot love a man you must address as "Sir" or a woman you must address as "Ma'm." Moreover, they cannot love you. There is no love in an army, only fear and authority and discipline, and when a school resembles an army, which it too often does, the only possible love there will resemble the love that exists between chums in a regiment. There can be no true love unless there is freedom. That applies to marriage also.

People are so scared of any loosening of marriage laws or sex freedom for youth that they visualise a world of licence. Free Love, they cry in alarm. They mean of course promis-

cuous love, which by the way obtains among gregarious animals like cows, horses, dogs, sheep, but not in solitary animals like lions, birds, tigers. I suspect that my dear tom cat, Jeep, is the father of most of Leiston kittens because he is domesticated, that is under the influence of humans. Freedom in love, and here I speak of sex love, does not lead to promiscuity. Love may not last for ever, but nothing lasts for ever, but while it lasts it is true and loyal and happy. Promiscuity in man is neurotic, a constant change of partner in the hope that the right one will be found at last . . . and she never is found, for the fault lies in the impotent, neurotic attitude of the Don Juan. A young woman after a period of promiscuity said to me: "With Bill I get an orgasmic life for the first time." I asked, why the first time. "Because I love him and didn't love the others."

Many parents have a fear of losing their children's love . . . if we don't bind their love to us they will give love to other people. Certainly in a school the best-loved housemothers get the most parental complaints about lost socks and jumpers. Certainly few mothers love their daughters-in-law, fathers their sons-in-law. The mother-in-law joke is no joke. The man feels that the mother is still demanding love and obedience from his young wife, and the house is not his own. The young wife is irritable because she had figured one aspect of marriage as a getting away from her mother. Even sparrows do not follow their offspring out of the nest, and every generation should have its own nest.

This stepmother business brings up the subject of parents having their own parents living with them. It is always better if possible for grandparents to live separately. Either they lay down the law about the upbringing of children, or they spoil them by seeing only the good or bad in

them. In wrong homes the children have four bosses instead of two, and even in good homes there is a strain because most often the grandparents keep trying to bring in their own antiquated views on childhood, although occasionally the oldest folks are more modern than the middle generation. Grandparents are inclined to spoil a child by a too possessive love. This happens when the grandma has had no real interest in life after her own family grew up. The third generation gives her a chance to begin her job again, with the added idea that her daughter or daughter-in-law is incompetent as a mother. The child is pulled both ways, and is apt to withdraw from both parties. Squabbling about a child, whether it be between mother and grannie, or between man and wife means to a child a loveless home. And even if the squabbling is hidden from the child, he is never deceived; he feels without being conscious of it that there is no love in his house.

When a child cannot find love he seeks hate as a substitute. "Mummy (or Daddy) takes no notice of me; she does not love me; she loves my little sister. I'll make her take notice of me, I shall," and he smashes the furniture. All problemicity is at basis founded on lack of love, and all punishment and moral lectures increase the hate.

The appearance of children sometimes militates against their having all the love they want, not often, but there are cases. A plain daughter is less likely to be loved than a pretty one. In the same way a dull son may be more harshly treated than a clever one. That is the answer to those critics who ask about environment . . . "My brother and I had the same environment, but look at the difference between our characters." No two children ever have the same environment. Bill had things all to himself until Jim was born and then the two had a new environment when Mary

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appeared. And the parents, rationalise as they may, never really love them all the same, as they so often say in reply to a child's query: Which of us do you love best?

No one can compel love; you cannot love by taking thought, and nearly every parent loves one more than the others; the Joseph and his Brethren story is repeated daily. There is nothing to do about it, nothing, because it is beyond the power of thought, of will. Some parents realise that they have a favourite, and they try pathetically to make up for it by favouring outwardly the unfavoured others. It helps but it does not really work. A hundred times I have heard a child say: "Mummy says she loves us all the same, but I *know* she loves the baby best." I once had a mother of a child in Summerhill who said, in answer to that question: "No, I don't love you as much as I do Peter, but I can't help it, can I?" It was an attempt at being honest, anyway, whether it had any later influence or not. It is better for the child to know the truth than to feel the lie. Another mother on being accused of not loving her boy of twelve replied: "I love you, but I don't like you." Another honest attempt; still, if the woman had been truthful all the other twelve years, the chances are that the boy would never have had to ask the question.

The illegitimate child often has a hard road to travel so far as love is concerned. He has no father, and to tell him, as some mothers do that his father was killed in the war or died of disease is definitely wrong. He has a grouse against life because he sees other boys with fathers, and the social condemnation of bastardy cannot but reach him in some way. In some circles the grouse is less; in Summerhill we have always had a few children of unmarried mothers, but no one cared a brass button; indeed the other children are often unaware if another is illegitimate. Under freedom

such children grow as happily as children born in wedlock. In the world outside the bastard child too often suffers. Sometimes he blames his mother and behaves badly to her; sometimes he adores his mother and plays the part of son-cum-father, fearing that one day his mother will marry a man not his father. What an odd world it is! Abortion is illegal and bastardy means social condemnation or even ostracism.

I must mention with pleasure the number of women today who do not accept the social disapproval of bastardy, women who openly have their love children, are proud of them, work for them, rear them well and happily. So far as I have seen their children are balanced and sincere. Unfortunately the number who can do this is limited. No woman teacher in a State school could do so and keep her job, no secretary in an office, no worker in a shop. I have more than once seen a parson's wife throw her maid out when she became pregnant: the anthem "Unto us a Child is born" did not ring through the manse.

To digress a little, this abortion question is one of the most sickening, hypocritical symptoms of the illness of humanity. I make the guess that there isn't a judge, parson, doctor, teacher or any so called pillar of society who would not prefer an abortion for his daughter rather than have the family face the disgrace of bastardy.

The rich are said to get out of trouble by sending their daughters to swell nursing homes where they are treated for irregularity of periods or what not. It is the lower middle class and the poor who are left, literally, to hold the baby. There is no way out for them. A middle-class girl can, by trying hard, find a doctor who will make an abortion for £60 to £100; her poor sister of the working class either runs the danger of an abortion by an unskilled

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woman abortionist, or has to have her child. There are clinics in London where women can be fitted with contraceptives. Only when a woman shows a marriage ring will the clinic fit her. The borrowing of a wedding ring, however, is not so far a crime. The whole business gives me the impression that I get when I see pornographic writing on the walls of a public urinal, one of a civilisation that deserves the price it pays for its spiteful, hateful morality.

That price in the end is cancer and diabetes and all the ills that flesh is heir to; it is misery and hopelessness. We spend thousands on cancer research, but all the radium and operations in the world will not cure cancer which, according to Reich, is a sexual disease—the putrefaction of the flesh following the putrefaction of the love life that a healthy humanity should enjoy. We don't need to be doctors or scientists to know that the future of humanity does not lie in drugs and inorganic manures and the suppression of the love life. Maybe the umpteenth World War will convince what is left of us that unless we can find charity and freedom and real love of children, Wells was right in saying that man cannot survive. The appalling feature of the Second World War was not the invention of the atomic bomb; it was the proof that our vaunted civilisation was only skin deep. The concentration camp with its more than Middle Ages torture showed us that humanity has not progressed one bit emotionally. We can evade the issue by saying that Hitler and his Gestapo were sub-human, forgetting that in any country, given the triumph of Fascism a thousand Gestapo beasts would crop up during the first week. A country like Britain that beats children is only separated in degree from a Jew-torturing Germany. The principle is the same . . . express your hate of life by

hitting the other helpless fellow. We see our own social hate expressed in our barbarous prison system, in which a man is robbed of all that makes life livable . . . love, freedom, work; we make a man a hater of self and fellow men, and then we give him a "Lifer" when his hate expresses itself logically in killing the flesh. And we do nothing about it. The Church stands by indifferent to prison, capital punishment, war.

Pardon; I am preaching again. If the Church founded on the life of Jesus does not preach, someone has to do it. I ask how can we have happy homes with love in them when the home is a tiny corner of a homeland that shows hate socially in a hundred ways? You can see why I cannot look upon education as a matter of exams and classes and learning. The school evades the whole issue; all the Greek and Maths and History in England will not help to make the home more loving, the child free from inhibitions, the parent free of neurosis. Teachers have a low social status because they are not important; they deal with mere trifles. The upper classes have wealth and therefore power, power to uphold, not only the master-slave economic morality, but also power to preserve the miserable society that, by imposing a cruel hate morality on the masses, castrates them, makes them fearful, hateful, narrow, child beaters. Politics will not save humanity. Most political newspapers are bristling with hate, hate all the time. Too many are Socialists or Communists because they hate the rich instead of loving the poor, but that applies more to the middle-class intellectual reds than to the genuine working-class Communists, who at least have gone through the mill and know what poverty and frustration are. The immediate future may be a trial of strength between U.S.A. and Russia: the ultimate future will be a trial of strength between

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those who hate life and youth, and those who love life and youth. It is as simple as that.

I write this in U.S.A. in late 1947. Discounting the optimism of a man who sees shops overflowing with all the things he has wanted to buy for the last seven years, I see a country that, on the surface (and a visitor can only see the surface) looks materially well off. The coloured cook in my host's house gets the equivalent of £500 a year, the odd-job man £600 a year. Cigarettes are eightpence for twenty, clothes reasonable in price, food excellent and plentiful. Working men have cars, and the general impression I get is that of a prosperous people, at least in the country, for I have not seen the big industrial centres in which frequent strikes point to things not being so rosy as they appear in rural Maine and Massachusetts. My impression is that materially U.S.A. is streets ahead of Britain. Any English woman would almost weep with envy to see an American kitchen with its refrigerator, electric cooking, electric gadgets of many kinds to lessen housework. Nearly every car is luxurious with its radio mast etc. Education is much valued, the wrong kind of education—schooling, learning.

Outwardly all is fine . . . odd, though, that I haven't seen wholemeal bread anywhere; they tell me the manufacturers take out the live element and feed it to the pigs, substituting in the white loaf some artificial vitamins, a process that seems daft to me even if it makes fortunes for the millers and bakers. U.S.A. has a high standard of material living. Underneath there is the same life hate that one has in Britain. I asked teachers what would happen if a woman teacher had an illegitimate baby. The unanimous answer was that she would get the sack. True, many parents wink at petting parties; wink by compulsion for they can do nothing else, and I think that children are freer here

than they are at home. There seems to be more camaraderie between parents and children. Good. Fine. But underneath there is the same moral suppression, the same helpless indifference to the threatening Third World War. The Americans drift aimlessly, fearful to be positive, for they also were castrated by their morality. Their education, like ours, has had too much head and too little heart. The emotional pest is as rampant here as at home.

I have not been to Russia, and can only conjecture from her abolition of co-education, her restoration of the Church, her laws about marriage and youthful sex, that Communism in its present form is not the solution for the sickness of humanity. Economic freedom and individual freedom should go together. Apparently in Russia they do not go together.

Then where in the world can we look for hope? The new India? But it is held down by fanatical religions, and all religions must be anti-life. Life is not life when it has mysticism.

Recently a homosexual man wrote me imploring me to tell him of any land that would allow him to be homosexual legally. I replied that I knew of no such land, and when I come to think of it I cannot think of any land where people can be heterosexual without treading on the corns of the killjoys, the haters.

Just as I cannot see education as a matter of exams and degrees, I cannot look upon love in the narrow way of the philistines; I cannot see the relief of tension and hate in the home without viewing the tension and hate in society. For it is the narrow morality of the home that makes society, upholds patriarchal society, deadens society. The home begins the castration that moral society demands. Of course the home is filled with emotional conflicts—father

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and mother fixations, repressed incest, jealousies, loves, hates. The Oedipus and Elektra complexes are real, very real indeed. We cannot redeem the home by psychoanalysing all the parents; all we can do is to educate the young in such a way that they in their turn will be conscious of some of the dangers that make the home bad for youth. Where father and mother are on sincere terms with their family, the father and mother fixations, be they positive or negative, will not arise in dangerous form. I mean by fixation something artificial, life-arresting; in the best of homes there will be love of parents, but love is not a complex.

There is a school of psychological thought that seems to attach more importance to aggression than to love. It holds that every child has a load of aggression to let off, and some of its adherents justify adult discipline on the ground that it gives the child occasion to get his aggression off his chest. It does, but the wrong person gets the result of the aggression; not the stern father or teacher, but the weaker brother or sister or the cat.

My own impression is that aggression is emphasised because our treatment breeds aggression. Aggression is power and hate combined in action, there is no aggression in a child's building a dam; that is power and interest. I find that in the freedom of Summerhill aggression does not appear in anything like the same strength in which it appears in strict schools. Some psychologists would say that it is there but repressed. I do not agree. A chained dog is aggressive; a free dog is not, and no psychologist would claim that a friendly Cocker Spaniel is repressing its aggression. Children have to have some aggression in order to force their way through life. The exaggerated aggression we see in unfree children is an over-protest against hate that has been shown towards them. In Summerhill where no child

feels he is hated by adults, aggression is not necessary. The aggressive children we have are invariably those whose homes give them no love and understanding. When I was a boy at a village school bloody noses were at least weekly phenomena. In twenty-seven years I have seen only one fight with bloody noses in Summerhill. Aggression of the fighting type is hate, and when children are in an atmosphere in which hate is eliminated, hate is not prominent. I think that the Freudian emphasis on aggression is due to the study of homes and schools as they are, and as I have said, you cannot study dog psychology by observing the retriever on a chain. Nor can you dogmatise about human psychology when humanity is on a very strong chain, one fashioned by generations of life haters.

## Some Problem Children and Anxiety

SOME years ago Summerhill gave up specialising in problem children, and since then I have not had the opportunity of probing into the innards of bad problems. The children that I am now going to write about are not abnormal in any way. They are simply victims of environment. There is Mildred, for example. She returns after every vacation spiteful, quarrelsome, dishonest, banging doors, complaining about her room or her bed or what not. It takes more than half a term to make her livable with. She spends the vacation nagging and being nagged by her mother, a woman who married the wrong man. All the school freedom in the world cannot give that child contentment or happiness. After an exceptionally bad holiday she returns pilfering in a small way. Making her situation conscious to her does not change the home environment of then, Mildred, you can't go down the street in slacks. What to do about her? I wish I knew.

Johnny, aged eight, returns to school with a nasty look, teasing and bullying weaker vessels. His mother believes in Summerhill, but his father is a disciplinarian. The boy must jump to his father's command. He tells me his father sometimes slaps him. What to do about him? I don't know.

Peter's mother promised to give him a penny every morning that his bed was dry. I countered by offering him threepence every time he wet the bed. He wets more at home than he does at school. I add that I got his mother to cease her rewarding efforts at her end before I began mine, so that he would have no conflict between her and me. One element in his enuresis is that he wants to remain a baby; he is jealous of his little baby brother. He vaguely senses that mother is trying to cure him, while I am showing him that wetting the bed doesn't matter a bit; in short, my threepence reward is encouraging him to remain a baby. I think of Homer Lane's "The best way to cure a habit is to indulge it," for indeed a habit means that something has not been lived out. Thumb sucking is a good example of this truth. It is better to wet the bed than to become a moral little prig.

Little Jimmy returns after a vacation saying: "I'm not going to skip a single lesson this term." His parents have been urging him to pass Matric. He goes to lessons for a week and then no teacher sees him in a class for a month. Another proof that talking is always useless, or worse—hampering.

These few cases are not stories of problem children at all. Under a rational environment they would be normal children. I could look back to the days when Summerhill had many problem children, giving instances and the method of treatment. To do so would not help the ordinary decent parent who is troubled about a child's behav-

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iour, and, as my post basket shows, there are many, many such. Distracted mothers write: "I am at my wits' end to know what to do with my son of twelve who has suddenly begun to lift things from Woolworth's. Please, please tell me what to do." It is as if a man would write saying that, after consuming a bottle of whisky a day for twenty years, he finds that his liver is bad. It would possibly be no good to tell him to cut out the booze at that stage. I usually answer these poor mothers by advising them to consult a child psychologist or to find the address of the nearest children's clinic. I could, of course, answer: "My dear woman, your son has begun to steal because his home is unsatisfactory and unhappy. Why not set about making his home a good home?" I might give her a bad conscience, but with the best will in the world she could not change her son's environment. Certainly with the guidance of a child psychologist a willing woman could effect a lot. He might recommend a separation from an unloved or unloving husband, or that mother-in-law should find another house. What he is unlikely to alter is the inner woman, the moralist, the frightened mother, the sex antagonist, the shrew. Changing the outer situation too often has its limitations.

I have mentioned the frightened mother. I interviewed one this morning, a prospective parent with a girl of seven. Every question she asked was an anxious one. . . . Does someone see that their teeth are brushed twice a day? Will she be watched so that she doesn't get on to the road? Will she get lessons every day? Will someone give her her medicine each night? I have had many children of anxious parents. Invariably the child acquires the parental anxiety, one that can lead to hypochondria. Little Martha has a small brother. The parents are both of them anxious folks.

I hear Martha in the garden shouting to her brother. . . . "Don't go into the pool; you'll get your feet wet. Don't play with that sand; you'll mess your new trousers." I say I hear Martha, but I should have said I heard Martha when she first came to school. Nowadays she doesn't care if her brother looks like a chimney-sweep; only on the last week of term does she get back her old anxiety, realising that she is going home to an atmosphere of constant anxiety. Psychoanalysis has shown us that much anxiety is the outcome of repressed sex, and the anxious parent is certainly one whose sex life is not a happy one. The child of anxious parents will often have a strong guilt feeling about masturbation, and if the parents' anxiety has an anti-sex basis, it is impossible for either father or mother to relieve the child's guilt by approving of masturbation. Anxiety and sex go together. We are all familiar with the Castration Complex nowadays. Children with strong sex guilt unconsciously wish to get rid of the tempting sexual organ, and often betray their wish by asking a special type of question. I had one boy who kept asking me questions in symbol form. . . . Would that tree die if a branch were cut off? Could an engine go without a funnel? Does a cow really need a tail? No answer could satisfy him, indeed I hardly think that he heard an answer; there could be no answer to his queries, because he was simply asking if he wouldn't be a better boy if he had no penis. I do not say that the questioning child always betrays a castration complex. I once had a small boy who deaved me with questions. What did you pay for that clock? What time is it? When is end of term? He never heard any answer. I knew that he was evading the big question that he wanted to have answered. One day he came to my room and asked a string of questions. I made no reply.

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I went on reading my book. After a dozen questions I looked up absently and said: "What's that? Where do babies come from?" He got up reddening.

"I don't want to know where babies come from," he said, going out and slamming the door. Ten minutes later he came back.

"Where did you get your typewriter from? What's on at the cinema this week? How old are you? (Pause.) Well, damn it all, where *do* babies come from?" He never came back to ask me any more questions.

Girls also have a castration complex sometimes. I have had little girls who feared that they had originally had a penis, but had had it cut off, no doubt as a punishment for masturbation. They were anxious little girls.

Let me try to distinguish between anxiety and fear. Fear of a tiger is natural and healthy; fear of being driven in a car by a bad driver is also natural and healthy. If we had no fear, we should all be run down by motor buses. Fear of a spider or a mouse or a ghost is unnatural and unhealthy. That fear is more anxiety than fear, or rather that fear is a phobia. A phobia is anxiety about something irrational. In Australia fear of a spider is rational, for a spider can be death-dealing: fear of a spider in England is irrational and therefore a phobia, the spider being a symbol for something else . . . sometimes, I have found, the mother who catches the fly child in her web, but to say that a spider always symbolises mother would be wrong, just as every snake in a dream is not a phallus.

Thus a child's fear of ghosts is a phobia. The ghosts symbolise something that the child is afraid of: it may be death if he has had a fear God training; it might be his own sex impulses which his home has taught him to dread and repress. Our little Zoë shows fear only at a loud noise like the

banging of a door. I shall be very much surprised if she ever fears ghosts, for certainly she will not be taught sex repression nor fear of any Lord, human or divine.

The anxious child is the child of the anxious parent, and that fact makes helping the child a very difficult task. I am trying in this book to avoid writing about anything pathological; I am writing for the ordinary parent and teacher, sometimes neurotic if you like, but not pathological. I merely say here that I have known cases of pathological anxiety where a mother or father showed extreme anxiety about a child because unconsciously the parent wanted to get rid of the child, the anxiety being the over-compensation for the repressed wish. In an earlier book I recall mentioning one mother who was scared lest her child be run over, drowned, lost. Analysis showed that unconsciously she wanted her child to die. She hated her husband, and her hidden thought was: If the child were not there I could leave my husband and go back to my old job. I hasten to add that anxious parents do not necessarily want to get rid of their children; all that is wrong is that they are fearful of life themselves, owing to their own warped sex life, and, identifying themselves with their children, they fear for their safety.

I admit that it is not easy to draw the line between realistic carefulness and anxiety. In my school we take every precaution for the safety of pupils. They must not bathe without a life-saver for every six children; they must not cycle on the street alone under the age of eleven. These rules come from the children themselves, voted in a general meeting. But there is no law about climbing trees; climbing trees is a part of life's education and to prohibit all dangerous undertakings would make a child a coward for life. We prohibit climbing on roofs, and air-guns and other

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weapons that might wound are verboten. I am always anxious when a craze for wooden swords begins, usually after the coming of a romantic film like *Henry V*. I insist that the points be covered with rubber or cloth, but even then I am always glad when the craze is over. I do not think that I should worry over my own children, but having the responsibility for seventy pupils of other parents, I certainly do have to worry sometimes. If only mothers knew what their children do! In my boyhood we had competitions to see who could run over the edge of a viaduct over a railway cutting. The edge was three inches, and the drop at least forty feet. My parents never knew about it. The happy truth is, however, that children seldom come to any harm. They are at least as wise as adults, and I feel sure that none of my pupils would do the daft things adults did during the war . . . taking short cuts through mine-fields, for example; very short cuts they were too.

It is of interest to speculate whether the outer situation—the threat of atomic warfare—will add to the anxiety of both parents and children. Possibly it will not. Neurotic anxiety is apt to attach itself to little things. I note that people today worry over coupons, queues, shortage of everything in shops, prices of tobacco and beer. It is understandable: life today is full of petty worries, and the big worry . . . whether humanity is to exterminate itself by its science . . . is left to the tender mercies of the so-called statesmen of the world. It is like casting your burden on the Lord in religion: in politics you cast your burden on Bevin or Truman or Stalin. For my own part I confess to considerable anxiety about the future, realising how dangerous humanity's undeveloped emotion can be. I have worked for many years to help new generations to find a better life, and sometimes I wonder if my work is going to

be wasted entirely. It looks as if hate is going to rule the world for some time to come, for the exploited classes, gaining power everywhere, are likely to go through a long period of bitterness and hate.

So far I do not see anxiety about the future affecting children, but as I said before, I observe that some parents show their world-crisis anxiety by wanting their children to learn much and pass examinations. It seems illogical, seeing that a bricklayer earns more than a teacher these days.

Conscription is having a bad effect on youth today. I see youth shrugging its shoulders, saying: "What's the good of starting a career? I've got to waste my time in the army, and when I come out it may be too late."

Some of my old pupils, after war service, came out of the forces listless but not cynical. For a few months most of them drifted about at a loose end, and I thought of patients needing a long convalescence after a major operation. A few were pessimistic about starting a late career, but today they are all working. Boys leaving school now show something of this drift or perhaps I should call it irritation at having to mark time when they want to march forward to some trade or profession. I do not, however, see any neurotic anxiety in their attitude.

I dwell upon this anxiety business because it is so important in the lives of children and adults. We are all anxious at times, every one of us, but our anxiety is greatest when we are onlookers and not doers. I get anxious if driven in a car whose driver I am not sure of, but I am never anxious when I drive myself, for any anxiety is converted into action. On a sinking ship a passenger would have more anxiety than a ship's officer, because the officer would be active all the time. Which raises the question: Is the anxious par-

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ent the one who is inactive? Apparently not; I have had anxious parents who worked like Trojans, worrying about their work, their incomes, their children. Nay, anxiety is an inner neurosis, springing from the realisation that there is no happiness in life, in work, in love, and especially love.

Having only the children of non-believing parents (mostly), I never see signs of anxiety arising from fear of punishment after death. In past days I have often seen it; I had it badly myself for many years following a Calvinistic childhood. I recall going through a wretched period in which I thought I had every disease under the sun, and, like Jerome K. Jerome, read the *Doctor at Home*, to discover that I had every disease, not even like Jerome, barring Housemaid's Knee. I did not know it then, naturally, but the period was one in which my masturbation guilt made me a sure victim for Hell Fire. I often wonder how many youths, reared in a religious atmosphere, have this same disease complex. I have seen it only twice among my pupils in many years. One lad had a phobia about going blind, and the other about going mad. His father had told him that masturbation led to madness. The father was a doctor. I wrote once that the fear of the Lord is not the beginning of wisdom, as the Bible says: the fear of the Lord is more likely to be the beginning of neurosis. Parents who give their children such fantastic, ignorant ideas about the results of masturbation are asking for infinite trouble later on. I once had a problem boy who suffered under such teaching, and I told his mother that she must undo the mischief. She promised she would. She brought him back after the summer vacation, and I said: "Well, did you take off the Verbot?"

"Yes," she said, "I did."

"Good! What did you say to him?"

"I said: 'Playing with your penis is not wrong, but it is a silly thing to do.' " That is, she took off one Verbot and put on another, and of course the poor boy continued to be anti-social, dishonest, hateful, and full of anxiety. It is an arresting thought that the atomic bomb is likely to be in the hands of thousands who were given anxiety about sex and religion, that is, haters of life and love.

Allied to anxiety in children is doubt about something hidden and important. Quite often I have heard a child say: "I don't really know if my parents are really my parents." This happens when the child feels that his home is unhappy; in phantasy he creates ideal parents, usually of exalted station, making for himself a fairy-tale similar to the fairy-tales of humanity, in which the ugly duckling turns into a prince. Such children are usually pathetically sad little things, dreaming their day-dreams in order to flee from a life that is too difficult for them. It may be that some novelists began life with such day-dreaming. We are none of us free from day-dreaming. My special day-dream was of a millionaire who would finance my school. I have, alas, now dropped that phantasy for ever. The popularity of films is due to the escapist aspect in us all, and that is why producers almost always give us sumptuous mansions with dollared gowns, with villains who get it in the neck and heroes and heroines who live happily ever afterwards. I conjecture that unhappy families patronise the cinema more than happy ones do. The public-house fulfils the same escape from a drab life, and of course the drunkard is a baby who is still fond of his bottle. So that we adults need not feel superior to the sad child who day-dreams that she is a princess. We are all Cinderellas, both sexes of us.

Anxiety enters into the problem of the ill-tempered child. The boy who flies into violent rages is always cover-

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ing up a load of anxiety. Maybe a dog barks to give itself courage; certainly some men roar for that reason. I have stopped many a rage by saying quietly: "What are you frightened of?" A psychoanalyst told me that one patient took up a heavy ornament, shouting: "I'll kill you!" as he raised it on high. The analyst said mildly: "Who said that to you?" The man dropped the weapon, burst into tears, and sobbed: "My father." It often happens that the rage is a reproduction of an incident in early life, when the child was terror-stricken, and if fathers and mothers go off the deep end passionately, they cannot wonder if later their offspring imitate them. A child's rage is seldom effective, because it is directed at the wrong person, and when an angry child throws a brick he nearly always misses; unconsciously he does not mean to hit; he wants only to make others afraid as he was made afraid.

## Cruelty

THERE is no instinct for cruelty. Animals are not cruel; a cat does not play with a mouse because it is cruel; it plays because the game is a play, and there is no consciousness in it. Sex aggression in a hen-run is not cruelty; the roosters do not fight because they are sadistic; there is no repressed motive behind their fights. Cruelty in humans is due to motives that are for the most part unconscious. In my long experience of children I have never had a child who wanted to stick pins into the eyes of rabbits, and minor evidences of cruelty have always been due to the child's previous environment. Free, happy children are not likely to be cruel. The cruelty of many children is due to the cruelty that has been practised on them by adults.

Boys at strict schools are more cruel to each other than children in Summerhill are: you cannot be caned without wishing to cane someone else, and like teacher, you select someone who is physically weaker than you are. Cruelty is invariably rationalised . . . it hurts me more than it does

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you, being the classic rationalisation. Few if any sadists say frankly: "I beat people up because I enjoy doing it," which of course is the true explanation. They explain away their sadism in moral terms . . . I don't want my boy to be soft; I want him to be able to fit into a world that is going to give him many a nasty blow, or . . . I cane my son because I was caned as a boy, and it did me a hell of a lot of good, or . . . Jews and negroes and Communists should be beaten up, because they are sub-human. The Calvinist ministers of South Africa accept the beating of natives as natural, holding the belief that the natives are the Biblical hewers of wood and drawers of water. Parents who leather their children are always ready with a glib explanation, and when questioned closely about their motives, usually fall back on the defence that a cat trains her kittens by hitting them with a disciplinary paw. I have not yet met a parent who honestly says: "I hit my kid because I hate him, hate myself, my wife, my job, my relations, in fact I hate life itself. I hit him because he is small and can't hit me back. I hit him because I am afraid of my boss and when he jumps on me I take it out of the brat at home." If parents were honest enough to say all that, or part of that, they would not need to be cruel to their children. Cruelty must have ignorance to protect the sadist from any realisation of his own perverted nature.

This book is not one about perversions, and if I mention the sadism that tortured millions in Germany, it is merely to say that most educated people realise that the torture was done by sexual perverts of the Julius Streicher type; his paper *Der Sturmer* was full of vile perverted sex long before concentration camps were erected. Yet many fathers who admit the sexual perversity of the camp or prison sadist, do not apply the same reasoning to their own minor

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sadisms. To beat a child in home or school is basically the same thing as torturing a Jew in Belsen. If sadism is sexual in Belsen, it is likely to be sexual in school or family in England. I can hear a mother reply: "Nonsense. Do you mean to say that when I spanked Jimmy's hand today when he was touching the vase I had from Granny, I was showing sexual perversion?" My diffident reply is: "Yes, you were showing sexual perversion even in a minor degree. If you are happily married and have a fully satisfying sex life you will not spank Jimmy. Haven't you often said that spinster teachers spank because they are sex-starved? Spanking is literally a hate of the flesh, and the flesh means the body with all its demands and longings. If you love your own flesh you won't want to make Jimmy's smart."

One of the big obstacles to abolishing cruelty in the family is the fact that society looks on cruelty as a necessary evil. We sentence some criminals to so many strokes with the cat; we tolerate a system in Public Schools where boys in their teens are permitted to give corporal punishment to smaller boys; we allow teachers to cane and tawse, and parents, apparently, can beat their children as much as they please so long as they don't leave weals that may bring them into a magistrate's court. Our criminal code is one long record of cruelty disguised as justice, so that Mrs. Smith naturally thinks that if she spanks her girl of two for yelling too loudly, she is in line with a noble tradition of citizen training. Let us frankly realise that the great majority of people believe that cruelty is necessary in law and discipline. And do not let us be prigs or self-deceivers about the matter. We are all capable of anger. Jesus himself lost his temper with the money changers. When I saw the Kharkov film I was angry at the senseless, cruel destruction done by the Germans, but at the end I was angry when

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a few Germans were strung up. Both methods were senseless and uncreative and hateful. What is wrong is the coupling of anger with cowardice, as when we strike someone who cannot retaliate. We never express our anger against what is more powerful than we are. It is too much to ask that a man turns the other cheek to the aggressor. That is an impossible, unattainable ideal, an ideal that takes no account of the unconscious from which anger and most things spring. Freud postulated a conscious, a personal unconscious and a racial unconscious. Reich postulates the three layers also, calling the middle one the Freudian unconscious of repressed material, and the deepest of all the vegetative system, the life force itself. The deepest unconscious is that by which we breathe and eat and love. The Freudian unconscious contains all that has been disapproved of by the conscious, and it influences our conscious actions strongly. The deepest instinct, the Id, will never make us beat a child or hang a criminal, because its chief concern is with living happily and freely. But the middle, the acquired unconscious, filled with repressed wishes and guilts due to outside interference with the life force, is also dynamic and restless and always seeking an outlet for expression, and because it is chained the outlet will tend to be hateful and anti-social. Thus it is possible that when a youth's sex is disapproved of by his parents, and consequently by himself, the sex wishes retreat into the middle unconscious and continually seek a means of open expression, but since sex is nasty or dirty and rude, the outlet seeks a safe way of escape, an approved way. So that it is possible for a badly-repressed man to start a campaign to censure women's bathing costumes, or to join a society against cruelty to animals or children, but it would be wrong to say that every philanthropist is a repressed sadist,

although it would probably be right to say that every bathing costume critic is a repressed Peeping Tom. Hence when we find a parent beating a child we have no idea of the manifold repressions that are motivating the hate action, and the cynically cheerful father might cry: "I can't help myself; my unconscious is at work letting off steam . . . I'll go on walloping."

Education's motive should be to abolish the middle unconscious. Animals have no apparent middle unconscious; they have their life force and their limited consciousness, and if you say that they remain cow-like or rat-like while we civilise the earth, I answer that cows and rats don't make rocket bombs nor criminal prisons, nor do they have sexual perversions and rape and prostitution. It is about time that we dropped the phrase "lower animals." I grant that we are up against great tracts of unexplored territory when we talk of unconscious layers. I am not at the moment conscious of a friend's telephone number, but it is parked somewhere in my unconscious, and can come out if I think hard enough.

I expect that humanity will always have to have some sort of department apart from consciousness in which to park phone numbers or the population of Brazil or the formula for Geometrical Progression. None of these would or could fortify a dynamic unconscious that would express itself in an anti-social or anti-life way. The few babies who today are being reared with self-regulation should not require an unconscious steam boiler that is always liable to burst with violence into flogging or slander or war. A healthy humanity would have a middle unconscious that was a filing-room for non-emotional contents, a room devoid of repressed emotions with guilt attached to them.

The unconscious is a hypothesis; we can't see it, we can

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only reason that it exists. The hypothesis seems to work. Spank a child for sex activity and its sex is shoved down into an unconscious department, from which it emerges again either as repressive morality or as sex licence. The necessity of repressions is argued by some on the ground that culture springs from repressed material that is sublimated, or to put it concretely, that Maud's feet would never have made the daisies rosy if the poet had slept with her. All right, then, society must weigh things up, and make up its mind whether repressed material coming out as poetry or art or music balances or overbalances repressed material coming out as beating of children or as sex crime. For my part, if the abolition of repressions produced a world with no crime and punishment and also without poetry, I should gladly live without poetry. The truth, of course, is that great art does not spring from repressions; it is only neurotic art that is produced by sex and other repressions. The freeing of humanity from the middle unconscious would give us healthy art every time. True art has no conscience, but the repressed region of the middle unconscious is one seething conscience.

I wrote earlier in this book that a cat was superior to a dog, in that it had no conscience, and I observe that a child reared with self-regulation is more like a cat than a dog. The self-regulated child has no desire to please adults by paying attention to them; it is much more concerned with things, scouring the room to find out what things are for and how they will react to his power . . . an unkind friend has just presented my Zoë with a drum. The moulded child is trained to react to people, to smile at the uncle, trained to be petted and chucked under the chin. Reacting to things does not give a bad conscience, does not lead to repression; reacting to people, unless the reacting

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is done spontaneously and freely, must lead to a bad conscience with repressions, for what baby wants to smile at uncle? If he doesn't smile at uncle, the tone of his mother must convey to him that he isn't a very good boy. Nay, bring up a child the cat way, not the dog way of obedience, bad conscience, hypocrisy. Rather a world of independent cats than one of tail-wagging insincerity. Ah, but isn't a cat a solitary animal, and isn't a dog a herd animal like man, gregarious, company-seeking? Cats are not community animals at all, so that in advocating a feline standard I may be accused of advocating a society of cats that walk by themselves, rejecting the gregariousness of humanity that is obviously right and proper. The paradox is that only when the individual is as free to be self-contained as a cat is, does he form part of a good human flock. The ideal life for man is community life plus a place of his own that he can retire to when he wants to be solitary, in other words a cat and dog life. Trained children never reach the cat and dog ideal; they are so dependent on the herd that to be alone is agony to them. They later flee from aloneness by joining political or sporting or a dozen other crowd activities, joining with the wrong motive, to get away from themselves. The curse of army life to balanced men is that it is all crowd life, with no opportunity to be alone.

All this apparently irrelevant argument seems far away from the subject of cruelty, yet unless we understand the factors that cause repressions, we cannot go far in examining cruelty. Children will never be cruel unless they have been forced to repress some strong emotion, that, left to itself, would have a happy, social outlet. They will have little or no self-hate to express in hating others. Every little bully has had his life interest warped in some way. Often he is simply doing to others what has been done to him literally,

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for every beating makes a child sadistic in desire or practice. Sometimes cruelty in children derives from sleeping in the same room as his parents and seeing or overhearing sexual intercourse, which to a young child gives the impression of cruelty . . . father is ill-using mother. No baby should sleep in its parents' room if they are economically free enough to have the child in its own separate room. Too few parents realise the danger of having the child with them all night.

Cruelty is perverted love; that is why extreme sadism is always perverted sexuality. The cruel person cannot give, because giving is a love action. It might indeed be said that the problem parent is the one who cannot give; he demands that the children give to him, give love, give obedience, give honour, give respect. The art of dealing with children is one of giving all the time. Not many adults look on the sexual act as a giving, otherwise the percentage of impotency and frigidity would not be round about seventy per cent as an expert has claimed it to be. To many men intercourse is polite rape, to many women a tiresome rite that has to be undergone. Thousands of married women never experienced an orgasm in their lives, and some educated men do not know that a woman is capable of an orgasm. In such a sex system giving must be minimal, and sexuality is bound to be more or less brutalised and obscene. The perverts who require to be scourged with whips or to beat women with rods are merely extreme cases of people who, owing to sex miseducation, are unable to give out love unless in the disguised form of hate. And this is a point that many will bitterly contest, that caning a child at home or school has the same roots as sexual sadism, and, moreover, that it has results similar to those of perversion. I fancy we can see the sex element in corporal punish-

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ment by considering the types of cruelty that obtain in different schools. Elementary children are caned on the hand, that is the offending part of the body in masturbation, but in the Public Schools where homosexuality has a natural breeding ground, caning is done on the bottom, the potentially tempting part of the anatomy. Colonel Blimp can and will cry in indignation: "Damned nonsense, sir!" He may be right; it may be all damned nonsense. What is not nonsense is the fact that so long as we believe in beating children in home or school or prison, we have no right whatever to preach against the lynching of negroes, the cruelty of South African farmers to natives, Gestapo tortures. Blimp may preserve his right to have Blimp Minor flogged at his Public School by undeveloped, well-meaning prefects, but when revolution comes, as it will, the old Colonel will be a charlatan if he writes to his morning paper protesting against working-class violence in Bond Street. Vulgarity, said Wilde, is the behaviour of others, and humanitarianism, in the main, is a condemnation of all who practise cruelties that are stronger in degree than the ones the humanitarian practises.

Mental cruelty, as they call it in American divorce cases, is more difficult to cope with than is physical cruelty. A parliamentary law could abolish corporal punishment in schools, but no law could ever reach the practiser of mental cruelty. A cynical or spiteful parental tongue can do as much damage to a child as can Solomon's rod . . . by the way Solomon didn't coin the phrase: Spare the rod and spoil the child; he said: "He who spares the rod hateth his son." We all know fathers who sneer at their sons . . . "buttery fingers, you can't do a thing without bungling it"; fathers who show their hate of their wives by constant criticism; wives who rule husbands and children with a stream

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of irritation and bullying. I had a young man on my staff who wanted me to appreciate and praise everything he did. His father had never praised him in his life, had always told him he was handless and stupid. Many a girl has said to me: "I can't do a thing to please Mummy. She can do everything better than I can, and flies into a temper if I make a mistake in sewing or knitting." A specialised form of mental cruelty is when a father shows his hate of his wife by taking it out on the children, the father, in most cases, being a child who is jealous of his son or daughter. Teachers sometimes show this brand of cruelty by being supercilious and sarcastic. Such teachers expect to hear roars of laughter from their classes when they thus torture some poor cowering individual child.

This is all diagnosis, illustration. I can do nothing about it. Who can? The parents are not as a rule conscious of cruelty. Recently a mother of a new boy came down to Summerhill. For a weekend she made the boy's life a misery. He wasn't hungry, but she stood over him and made him eat his lunch; he was grubby after making a tree hut and she ran him off to scrub him clean. He spent his pocket-money on ice-cream and she gave him a lecture about how bad it was for his stomach. She corrected him when he addressed me as Neill without the Mister. I said to her: "Why the devil did you send him to this school if that is your fussy, anxious attitude to your son?" She answered innocently: "Why? Because I want him to be free and happy; I want him to become an independent man, unspoiled by outside influence." I said "Oh," and lit a cigarette. The woman had no suspicion that she was treating her boy cruelly and stupidly; she was transferring to him all the anxiety that her own frustrated life gave her. Hence I ask: What can one do about it? Not a thing. A million

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mothers are similarly unconsciously cruel, while consciously they believe sincerely that they are doing the best they can for their children, that without their interfering guidance the children will not be able to face life. The Church would approve of their treatment of the young; the head of the local school, in most cases, would agree with the good lady, and all the believers in original sin would applaud her methods. So I ask: What can be done about it? Nothing, nothing but to give a few illustrations, hoping for the best, hoping that maybe one parent in a million will say to himself or herself: "I never thought of that! I thought I was being cruel to be kind. Maybe I was wrong."

## C H A P T E R X V

### **The Stiff Stomach Danger**

HERE is the story I had from a young couple of modern parents. Mother-in-law came to stay with them, and the baby began to be badly constipated for the first time in its life. They took the child to a Reich therapist and told their tale. The therapist listened, and then said: "The trouble is grandma. She is stiff in stomach, repressed, authoritative; what happens when she holds the child?" The mother replied: "The baby cries." He advised them to get the grandma out of the house as diplomatically as possible. They did, and the constipation ceased. Later they had to leave the baby with her for an afternoon . . . remorse about our own Zoë. A woman visitor recently took her up, and Zoë screamed because she felt the effect of the anti-life body of the repressed spinster.

This brings up the question of human artificial insemination. The day may soon come when sex-starved women will have babies by artificial insemination, just as cows to-

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day have calves. I foresee great danger here. It is almost impossible for a woman who has had no sex life to have an unstiff body, and an approval of bodies in general, and if such a woman is to have a baby the chances are that the baby will feel the lack of warmth and freedom in the body of the mother. I feel that to bring anything artificial into human conduct is evil. Artificial insemination is eliminating the functional side of sex. People do not have sexual intercourse because they want to have babies; if pregnancy suddenly and miraculously were the result of eating a certain kind of food, sexual intercourse would not diminish at all: it would increase enormously. The intercourse is functional; it satisfies an appetite, the appetite of giving oneself in love. The joy in having a child is a dual one, the giving of love and the product of love. Eliminate the first factor and the product of test-tube insemination is nothing but a pale shadow.

We have mechanised the world and we seem about to mechanise life itself. However, I grant that there is a strong case for the free woman who cannot get the kind of free man she wants, having a baby by artificial means. I know warm women getting on in years, women who for various reasons never had a man, who could give all the love and warmth a baby requires.

The genius of Reich lies in his having discovered that one cannot separate body and soul. His therapeutic method deals primarily with the body and its stiffness. Repressions express themselves somatically in tightness, especially of the mouth, the neck, and the pelvis, and during the treatment the stiffness goes before the memories of repressions tumble out. Reich contends that no neurotic breathes freely, and points out that the small child when made afraid, catches its breath and stiffens its body.

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Babies who are being brought up with self-regulation do not show tenseness. Their bodies are loose as bodies should be. The term "loose woman" must have sprung from the appearance of the woman who loved love, for she had no retracted pelvis. Her chapel-going sister walks with her pelvis well drawn in. Please, I am not contrasting the prostitute with the chapel-goer, for one is just as neurotic as the other. If love were free prostitution would die for ever, and chapel-going too. But at a venture I should guess that a prostitute type of woman would make a better mother than a religious type of woman; she would be less likely to give the baby a stiff body and a warped soul.

There is a growing realisation that bodily stiffness is something bad, something unnatural. There are various kinds of gymnastics that aim at loosening the body. All to the good, yet loosening by gymnastics will not automatically release the inhibitions that first caused the muscles to contract and remain contracted. There are several schools of breathing. Good again, but breathing alone will not solve complexes. When I was in Hellerau, Dresden, 1921-4, we had over sixty girls in our Rhythmic School. They worked hard all day long at gymnastics, plastics, breathing, dance; their leg and arm muscles were being exerted for hours each day. Many of them were very neurotic, miserable, incapable of love and loving, choosing for their solo dances a *Totentanz* . . . a Dance of Death. Nay, exercise is not enough, and breathing is not enough, although personally I find that if I am in an anxious situation my fear lessens if I breathe deeply and empty my lungs exhaling. In sudden fear we all catch our breath for the moment. The child who lives in fear has a life of catching its breath . . . and holding it, and the sign of a well-reared child is his free breathing. I saw Reich

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one day with a little girl who was not breathing freely, and was looking downcast and unhappy. Reich said: "Come on; let's play doggies," and he began to pant like a dog that had been running. The little girl, shy at first, joined in and panted as he did. It was wonderful to see how her face cleared and how she began to laugh.

Parents can do a lot to prevent their children from having stiff bodies. I think it would be unwise for parents to attempt by manipulation to free their children's stiff bodies, as Felicia Saxe is doing so brilliantly in America with problem children. That is an expert job that can be done only by a practitioner who has herself gone through a training in dealing with neurotic children. On no account should relatives ever attempt to deal with each other psychologically: I have known cases in which husband analysed wife, or wife husband. They were unsuccessful, sometimes positively fatal. No parent can or dare treat his own child analytically, whatever the school of treatment. So that when I write that parents can help their children to escape stiff stomachs, I simply mean that they can try consciously to do nothing that will help to inhibit the child. When Zoë starts and cries at the banging of a door, my wife picks her up and hugs her warmly and then holds her in such a way that she can kick her limbs freely. At any sign of stiffening the parent should play with the child in such a way that he has to move his muscles freely. A sham fight I find effective with children of four or five, a fight I must always lose. Laughter is a great releaser of emotion and bodily tightness, and a healthy baby laughs and chuckles a lot. Tickling the ribs will often start a bout of happy laughter, and . . . oh, here I should mention a school of child psychology that disapproves of touching a child in case one gives it a father or mother fixation. I am sure that

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that is nonsense. There is no reason at all why parents should not fondle their children, tickle them, stroke them, pat them. To tickle a child's genitals in order to quieten it, as some nurses are said to do, is wrong, because the motive is wrong. Also the danger of giving the child a sexual fixation on the adult is great; a child should be autoerotic and then heterosexual with the opposite sex of the same age. Willie, aged four, when asked if he had a sweetheart, replied: "Yes, Dorothy . . . but she won't let me lift her dress."

Sex play among small children is a natural, healthy act that ought not to be frowned on; on the contrary it should be encouraged as a prelude to a healthy adolescence and adulthood. Parents are ostriches hiding their heads in the sand if they are ignorant that their children do have sex play in dark corners, with, naturally, a guilt that lives on in later life, usually betraying itself in disapproval of sex play when the children become parents themselves. Bringing sex play out into the light is the only sane thing to do.

There would be infinitely less sex crime in the world if sex play were accepted as normal. That is what moral parents cannot see or dare not see, that sex crime and sex abnormality of any kind are due to sex disapproval in early childhood. They told me in South Africa that women are not safe walking in the dark in Johannesburg, where thousands of natives are segregated in compounds at the gold mines, starved of sex, whereas in Transkai, where natives live naturally with their women, a white woman can walk abroad in safety. And Malinowski told us that there was no homosexuality among the Trobriands until the shocked missionaries segregated boys and girls in separate hostels. There was no rape among the Trobriands, no sex crime. Why? Because small children were given no re-

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pressions about sex. The big question for parents today is this: Do we want our children to be as ourselves? If so, will society continue as it is with rape and sex murder and unhappy marriages and neurotic children? If the answer to the first question is: Yes, then the same answer must be given to the second question. And both answers are the prelude to atomic destruction, because they postulate the continuance of hate of life.

I say that sexual play goes on everywhere among children. But, being usually guilty play, it has its special dangers. I came across a case in America of a small boy of six playing sexually with a girl of five. I was consulted about it. Said the teacher: "He is sadistic and hurts the little girl's vagina. Should I allow it to go on?" I at once said no. "But," said the teacher, "Mary enjoys it, too, although it hurts her." Again I said no. "Simply explain to the boy," I said, "that he can hurt himself if he likes, but he must not hurt another child. You can't have a small girl introduced to sex in a sadistic way. She'll have a stiff stomach for life."

All our leering attitude to sex, our guffaws in music halls, our scribbling of obscenities on urinal walls spring from the guilty feeling arising from the infancy suppression of masturbation and from the driving into holes and corners of mutual sex play. There is secret sex play in every family, and because of the secrecy and guilt there are many fixations on brothers and sisters that last for life and make happy marriages impossible. If sex play between brother and sister at the age of five were accepted as natural, each of them would advance to a sex object outside the family freely without backward looking. The guilt affords a mutual tie.

Parents have to decide one way or the other. There is no sitting on the fence, no neutrality. Their choice is

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guilty secret vice sex, or open healthy happy sex. If they take the morality standard they must not complain of the misery of sex-perverted society, for it is the result of the moral code. They must not hate war, for the hate of self that they give their children will express itself in war. I say again and again that humanity is sick, emotionally sick, and it is sick because of guilt and anxiety acquired in childhood. The emotional pest is everywhere in our civilisation. Like the League of Nations, Uno is miserably breaking up, ostensibly because of rival power politics, fundamentally because the world is full of hate and distrust and stiff stomachs. War No. 3 looms ahead and seems almost unavoidable, surfacey because Communism and Capitalism cannot live together, deeply because Communists and Capitalists are men and women who have been reared to a hate of love and life. Moralist parents, will you worry much about your children's sex play when the atomic bombs begin to drop? Will the virginity of your daughters assume great importance when clouds of atomic energy make life impossible? When your sons are conscripted for the great Death No. 3, will you still hold on to your little chapel-church faith in the suppression of all that is good in childhood? Will the God you blasphemously pray to for rain save your life and those of your children then?

This is not rhetoric; it is sincere writing. Some of you may answer that this life is only the beginning, that in the next world there will be no hate or war or sex. In that case, shut this book, for we have no contact. To me eternal life is a dream, an understandable dream indeed, for man has failed in practically everything except mechanistic invention. The dream is not good enough; I want to see heaven on earth not in the clouds . . . and the pathetic thing is that most people want the same thing. They want but

haven't the will to reach it, the will that was perverted by the first slap, the first sex taboo.

I see why Christianity has failed. It by-passed the greatest lover of humanity ever heard of, the founder, and hitched its wagon to that inferior star St. Paul, a man full of guilt and sex repression, a man who saw goodness only intellectually. No true follower of Christ could live in a manse or bishop's palace, could live without misery in a land that had prisons and cruel punishment and capital execution, that had super-rich and super-poor. Man chose Barabbas but his name was Paul, for he murdered the love of Jesus, Paul the hater of sex, proved by his hateful attitude to women. Nietzsche was right when he said that Christ was the first and last Christian. "Suffer little children to come unto me," he said, and St. Paul and his disciples stole the poor little mites and drilled them into life-haters. There is no Christianity; there is only Paulinity. To follow Christ meant to love your neighbour as yourself, and man could not do it, and gave up trying. What a stiff stomach Paul must have had!

I am no research scholar; I have no idea if the Gospels are genuinely true or not. All I have from the general picture is a vision of the man Jesus, a man full of giving love, asking none in exchange, full of charity, condemning no one if we except the money-changers, and there his reaction only showed how human he was. The blasting of the fig tree I take as a childish fairy tale. Sin to him appeared to be sickness; he apparently was conscious of man's unconscious 2,000 years before Freud was born. He did not have to resist temptation because within himself he did not feel guilty. Paul on the contrary appears as a man, not gentle like Jesus, aggressive (he was at the stoning of Stephen, and leopards do not often change their spots), guilty,

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continually warring against what he imagined were the temptations of his vile flesh, in short a man of sin. Jesus could never have supported a war, but Paul might well have blessed the standards of a holy war . . . as if any war could be holy. I can imagine Paul's living in a bishop's palace, and can imagine that today Jesus would be living among the waifs and strays of slumland . . . and being charged at Bow Street with them.

Hence, when religionists give their children sex representations, I ask them which man they are following, Christ or Paul? I ask them the same question when they beat children, and there is beating of children in Roman Catholic and Church schools. I know that Jesus could never have struck a child or an adult. I am sure that any child approaching him would have felt warmth and love in his presence, and I am pretty sure that Paul would have given any child a stiff neck. The student of psychology might well ask me here: "Aren't you identifying yourself with Christ?" Of course I am, but with Paul also.

Reared as I was under Scots Calvinism it would be miraculous if somewhere in my personality there was not a vestige of Paulinity to contend with. Christ and Paul are in all of us who were brought up in our Christian system. My school work tries to keep the new generation free from the curse of Paulinity, life hate. I don't think that any of my many pupils ever hear of the man, but they all know about Christ. A recent woman visitor said to me: "Why don't you teach them about the life of Christ so that they will be inspired to follow in his steps?" I answered that one learns to live, not by hearing of other lives, but by living. I said that words are infinitely less important than acts. Many have called Summerhill a religious place because it gives out love to children. That may be true, only

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I dislike the adjective so long as religion means what it generally means today, antagonism to natural instinctive life, so long as religion is practised by men and women in drab dull clothes, retracted in belly, singing mournful hymns of tenth-rate music, asking forgiveness for their sins . . . but, crossing the Atlantic I laughed pleasantly to see how some of the priests on board enjoyed themselves at the bar. Religion does not apparently completely de-humanise the dog-collared brigade.

## The Psychology of the Family

POLITICIANS of all parties agree in accepting the family as the unit of social life. As the family is, so is the State. Russia, after a period of suspicion of the family, a suspicion interpreted abroad as an attempt to break up the family, is now using propaganda to encourage the strengthening of the family. No wise statesman would think of abolishing the family, because the families of a country are its backbone; they are its best, indeed a country's only support. Now that civilisation spells patriarchy all power is anchored in the family, and naturally in the head of the family. The man in the house is king, and the men in the House of Commons and in the country rule. The usual argument is that in olden days the man had to go out and hunt the breakfast while the woman stayed at home and cooked it. The argument runs that owing to her periodical pregnancies the woman was unable to function outside the home, hence it came that men were superior to women, more powerful physically, more

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enterprising, braver, harder . . . so said the pundits.

What men did in a matriarchic society the pundits don't say. The truth today is that our society is an authoritative one, and the man is supreme. Man's laws put man first. I understand that a wife cannot get a passport without her husband's written statement of consent. I believe that if a wife wants to send her child to a progressive school, while the husband favours a school with beatings, the husband has the power to enforce his will. I am told that a man can demand sexual intercourse when his wife does not desire it. The laws of heredity show that the law is man-made. In today's *Times* appears a letter signed by several women heads of colleges demanding that peeresses be allowed to sit in the House of Lords, and it is recent history, the story of how women struggled to be let into the medical and legal professions. Today women teachers are paid less than men teachers, even when the men teachers are unmarried. Even if one or more of the above statements are no longer true today, enough has been said to show that the woman in the family is an inferior in the eyes of an authoritative society.

Man rules the home and he rules the land, and he makes his home such that it furthers patriarchal rule. When I was a boy my brothers and I did not wash the dishes or the clothes; we loafed around while our sisters did all the chores, for we were the superior ones who were to go out and perpetuate the man-made system of family and national life. Home discipline is fundamentally aimed at continuing the patriarchal power whether it be in the church or the parliament or the city council. Authority is vested in those who desire an obedient youth, and, as Reich points out, the best way to get obedience is to unman youth by an elaborate system of sex prohibitions and

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alarms. Reich said that patriarchal society must castrate the workers symbolically in order to get its full supply of docile, obedient, unrebellious wage slaves. It is true, but if capitalism dies (and it is dying fast) man-made authority will still demand the castration of youth for a long time to come. Freedom for youth will come only when society is neither patriarchal nor matriarchal, when it is a balanced combination of both. I have no means of knowing how the Russian plan of making the sexes equal in jobs worked out, and can only wonder if making a woman captain of a warship meant any more than making an English woman head of a laundry. Certainly Russia took a step to the abolition of man law, although I doubt if Stalin's successor will be a woman.

Often in actual practice the woman in the family is not inferior. Most men have some fear of their wives, and the henpecked man is only an exaggerated specimen of the average man who transfers to his wife the fear that was originally attached to his mother. On the other hand the wife retains some of the fear and admiration she had for her own father, and, henpeck her husband as much as she likes, in essentials she supports his authority, and, for instance, often outdoes him in condemning masturbation or sex play. I think that the increase in divorce has resulted from the gradual freedom won by women, from their increased opportunities for getting education. Many women, even if dimly, realise that the home is a prison for them, a homely harem, and they no longer accept Sultanship as their criterion of life and love. Naturally the divorce, realising that the subjection of women and children is necessary to its continuance as a supreme authority. And the tardiness of marriage law reform in parliament

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is due to this same cause. Women and children must be held in bondage, and the tragedy is that man, who holds them in bondage, is, and must be a slave himself, for in a prison the warder also is confined. Man's slavery is one to hate; he suppresses his family and in doing so suppresses his saying Yea to life. He has to set up courts and prisons to punish the victims of suppression, especially of sex repression, with its concomitant rape and lust murder and homosexuality and what not. And he drags his wife after him, and she, poor soul, gladly "gives" her son to the wars that man-rule creates and calls defensive wars, patriotic wars, wars to save democracy, wars to end wars. In my innocence I used to wonder why all the mothers of Britain did not demand with one voice that their sons should not be killed in wars. I could not see that obedient woman must obey the call of the Father whether he is king or prime minister or Hitler or the priest who proclaims a holy war. They "give" their sons because their sons do not belong to them; they belong to the State, the old men, the university examiners, the store managers, the bishops, the politicians.

Now let me write about the children in the authoritative family. In any family, free or unfree, the children have to contend against many a factor that induces inferiority. The size of the parents makes the children small and powerless; the furniture is adult size; the hours kept are dictated from above. In a free family such things are overcome easily, but in an unfree family natural inferiority due to age and size is increased by fear of authority. Sex prohibition in an unfree family anchors sex to the family, and thus arises the Oedipus Complex with all its ramifications. Especially does the masturbation Verbot force child sex to interest itself in the parents, for every time a

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mother smacks a child's hands for touching its genitals, the sex of the child gets constellated with mother, and the hidden attitude to mother becomes one of desire and repulsion, love and hate. Incest flourishes in an unfree home, and certainly incest is a help in retaining adult authority, but at the price of a plethora of neurosis. If sex were allowed to go over the garden wall to the boy or girl next door, the authority of the home would be in danger; the incest tie to father and mother would be loosened, and the child would automatically leave the family emotionally. It sounds absurd but incest and its taboos are a very necessary pillar of support to the authoritative State, just as prostitution is, or perhaps I should say was, a necessary safeguard for the morality of nice girls in nice homes. Abolish incest and youth is free to go over the garden wall, but if he goes he is lost to authority.

I hasten to say that fathers and mothers do not think in terms of incest. They are doing what their parents did to them, bringing up respectable, chaste children, conveniently forgetting all the hidden sex play and pornographic stories of their own childhood, forgetting the bitter rebellion against their parents that they had to repress with infinite guilt. They do not realise that they are giving their own children the same guilt feelings that gave them miserable nights long ago. Guilt is a great buttress of the man-made civilisation. Make children feel guilty and sinful and they will be sheeplike for life. Why did eighty million Germans follow a house painter, many of them to death? Why did they seek a Führer? Because they felt guilty, weak, so that they could not stand alone; Hitler offered them the Promised Land of freedom, and all men seek freedom and fear it at the same time. There was a Hitler in every family, a little Führer, preaching ideals and at the same time

demanding docility. The big Führer collected all these obedient, guilty, longing people into an enormous crowd, a crowd ready to do or die for the cause of the great Pied Piper, a piper whose notes may have been strident, but a piper who was sincere in his belief in his paradise. Free men and women would not have followed his sinister lead. A Hitler can arise only in a land wherein youth is made guilty about sex and consequently about life, and, given the circumstances, a Hitler could arise in our own country. At present authority is getting along quite nicely without an individual leader.

The family is the mainstay of religion. In church the family has a pew. The church is called in to baptise, marry, and bury, and good families go to church or chapel in their Sunday best. Every good boy knows that God is on the side of authority, and very, very much against wicked thoughts . . . father can only discover the wicked deeds. The God whose bishops bless battleships is a great God, a wonderfully versatile God, for he can see what you do under the bed-clothes and is very angry with you indeed. Just as parental interference with sex constellates sex with the interferer, so does sex become constellated with the interfering God. Nuns devote their sex to God; they "marry" the church or the saviour. At the university nearly forty years ago some cynical students christened the Students' Christian Movement the masturbatory brigade, a cruel libel of course, but springing from the well-known fact that often religious longings in youth spring from the guilt of masturbation. Homer Lane, who loved the game of symbolism, used to pick out the sex crimes where the murderer hid the body in the attic, and claim that he was doing logically what home and church had taught him to do, carrying his guilty sex heavenwards. He may have been as right

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as those who claim that church spires are phallic symbols directed heavenwards. Symbolism is in the main interesting speculation, and in most cases cuts no ice anyway. Yet it may be more important than I realise, for recently a village joiner who makes excellent wheelbarrows told me that he dare not paint them red. I asked why. "Because this village is rank Tory," he said. "God, it would ruin my trade if I sent out a red barrow, they must all be blue."

Civilisation is sick and unhappy, and I claim that the root of it all is the family. Children are deadened by all the forces of reaction and hate, deadened from their cradle days. They are trained to say Nay to life because their young lives are one long Nay . . . don't make a noise, don't masturbate, don't lie, don't steal. They are taught to say Yea to all that is negative in life . . . yes, respect the old, religion, the schoolmaster, the law of the fathers, in short, say Yea to the seven deadly virtues. But there can be no virtue where there is no freedom. It is not virtuous to respect one who is not respectable, not virtuous to live in legal sin with a man or woman you have ceased to love, not virtuous to love a God you really fear.

There can be no real freedom in the family or in the nation so long as the doctrine of original sin continues to be accepted. It is retained because it is a very effective means of keeping youth from freedom. All the crime in the world is taken as proof that man is a sinner, and the moralists are blind to the truth that it is their law of original sin that makes the crime. Only a wilfully blind, prejudiced person would contend that rape and sex murder would be known in a society that was free about sex. For nearly twenty years I dealt with problem children, many of them bad cases. They governed themselves as a community, were free to learn or play; when they stole they

were rewarded; they were never moralized to, never made afraid of authority earthly or heavenly. So far as I know not one of them who spent—say—seven years in Summerhill ever went to prison, ever raped, ever became anti-social. Freedom even as late in life as fifteen years of age often turned “original sinners” into good citizens. Today when we are no longer a school for problems, a boy expelled from many schools for being anti-social, is a happy, creative, social boy of twelve. Authority would have finished him up in Borstal, and if freedom does that to the problem child what could it do to the millions of children who are perverted by the authority of the family? I take up the answer I have heard so often . . . “Yes, but you have a special gift in handling children. Summerhill is a one man show.” Any man or woman with a belief in original goodness can do what I have done. It isn’t a question of gift; it is one of belief, of faith if you like. In schools Curry does it, so does David Wills, so does John Aitkenhead, and the number grows. In families many parents do it, and there are quite a lot of children living today who will never spank a child or moralise about sex or give a fear of God. But the masses remain under the curse of hateful authority, and the future of humanity rests with the masses and not with the few believers in freedom for youth.

One can only speculate about the future, the seemingly immediate future when all the world will be socialistic. Will the abolition of private profit and inheritance of property bring a new attitude of freedom? If Russia today were free from fear of outside interference and war would it allow personal freedom to say and write what one wanted to? Has the present wave of bringing writers into line, any-censuring them for the infiltration of western ideas, any-

thing to do with the fear of a new war? Is the family in Russia today ruled by authority? If so, will our own economic revolution leave our authoritative society untouched? In short, is there something innate in man, that, whatever his system of government, makes him a repressor of youth and a hater of sex and life? Summerhill record of problem children answers no; man seeks freedom all the time and fails to find it. I think the answer lies in the word bureaucracy. If the capitalist and moralist is to be replaced by the bureaucrat, then authoritative society will continue. Today most of us know of little tin-god officials in Food Offices, Labour Exchanges, Fuel Offices who, clothed in a little brief authority, are arrogant and off-hand with the public. Bureaucracy will tend towards making itself a class apart, retaining the hereditary principles as nepotism. Bureaucracy will attract the uncreative, conservative element that seeks security and a pension, that fears to take responsibility. Under bureaucracy, if I wanted to set up my school, any uncreative, narrow little man in Whitehall could say no. Recently I wrote to the Ministry of Education saying that a Danish parent wanted to send me twenty to fifty Scandinavian pupils, and that the parents of these pupils would send over free of charge prefabricated houses to house them. I said to the Ministry that the only labour required would be erection and possibly laying on water, that the plan would bring foreign money into the country, and that the local shops would benefit from the influx. The Ministry said no, without offering any explanation why it rejected the scheme. It might have said that it didn't like my scheme of education, or that there were enough mouths to feed in England already; then I should have known where I stood. It is typical of bureaucracy that it uses authority without any human explanation, so that we

all feel that a State department is a soulless machine divorced from all that we appreciate as human and friendly.

Extend bureaucracy under socialism or communism and the family will adapt itself to its new master and duly suppress the children sufficiently to make them obedient servants of the State and the Town Council. As a side-line the aim of the family will be to produce sycophants and yes-men whose ambition will be to join the ranks of the powerful State officials. There is no freedom for humanity in that direction. The genius Lenin said that the aim of socialism was the withering away of the State, a great ideal, but how shall we ever get the politicians and bureaucrats to give up their control of the State? Theoretically the public can control the bureaucrat; Mrs. Brown can write to headquarters complaining that the postmaster or the food office official is rude and unhelpful, but in most cases she does not do so, fearing lest the official will survive the complaint and have his knife into her deeper than before. I have a malicious memory of an incident in my boyhood when a man, after getting an uncivil reply from a postmistress, walked to the telegram booth and handed her a telegram to the Postmaster General, saying: "I have been insulted by the postmistress of X." He withdrew the wire when she implored him to. Poor woman, she may have had a headache or a bad husband, but the public should not suffer for the personal troubles of any official. Usually officialdom is a routine, dull job, liable to deprive even the robust of any joy in life, for what man can juggle with Form XYZ 1078/B/45 all day and remain alive?

The more people fear responsibility the more bureaucracy is required, and ultimately the cure for bureaucracy lies in the growth of the spirit of self-reliance. That spirit is inhibited today by the training in obedience to the sta-

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tus quo. Some time ago a rich friend said to me: "I am looking for a £10,000 a year man, and can't get one. I can get any amount of £1,000 a year men, and one or two £5,000 a year men, but I don't want them." I know nothing of business and can only guess that a £10,000 a year man would be one who could accept much responsibility in a purely commercial sense. I use this illustration because in the more important sense of life itself, we cannot expect the best initiative and boldness to come from a system of repressed families.

It cannot be disputed that the economic factor is the one that fashions society. In all countries the laws are made to protect the ruling caste. When the ruling class is the whole of society, not, as in transition socialism, the manual workers only, what laws will be made by such a society? When everyone is free from poverty and want and fear of old age what will be the vested interests that will seek to suppress youth in case it asks for too much? Long after you and I are dead youth will be free to love and live in its own way. With the motive gone to keep down the poor and to breed good wage slaves the instruments of the oppressor will lose their power. These instruments today are religion and mysticism and all other irrational life killers: they are moralism and authority founded on vested interest . . . the power of the old men. We saw the upsurge of freedom in the youth movements in Russia in the days of the revolution. That freedom was in the end checked by the old men, the old men who had never known freedom in their own youthful serf days, but that freedom for youth will return to Russia and to all the world, and gradually as generation succeeds generation with increased freedom, youth will in the end begin life in freedom. Today socialism retains the capitalist morality; tomorrow it will fash-

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ion its own morality, and one of my sad thoughts is that I won't live long enough to see what sort of a family will exist a thousand years hence.

Modern science began the disintegration of the family. In my boyhood family life was the centre of most activities. If we all dressed up we had nowhere to go. In our village we had an annual concert, an annual magic lantern show with religious pictures, an annual school picnic in farm carts. Today children have cinemas; they listen to radio programmes, in the home indeed, but the voice is outwith the home. Motor cars and buses are at most families' doors. Youth hostels, cycling, hiking, clubs of all sorts take the young away from their homes. Few honest parents object to the out-of-doors activities; they are sincere enough to realise that their own freedom is increased, for however much parents love their children, there are occasions on which they see and hear too much of them. Even those evils of war and conscription are a means of breaking the attachment to the home. I am writing about the wrong kind of home, the home that keeps children tied to the apron strings too long. Children from a happy, free home are pleased to be at home and pleased to be out of it. Some magistrates deplore the laxity of the home; they see delinquency as the result of lack of parental control. This is a narrow view. Certainly the limited freedom children now have often results in gangsterdom, but this is the product of home and school authority. The "laxity" of The Little Commonwealth did not lead to gangsterdom, nor does the "laxity" of Summerhill result in anti-social products. Parental control is the very devil because it is the opposite of parental love. I am writing a whole book but, really, all I have to say is that you cannot have a good humanity by treating it with hate and punishment and suppression, that

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the only way is the way of love. And our children who leave us to see films and football matches are seeking the love the home does not provide. Everyone who has practised analytical psychology of any brand knows the intense hate that family life engenders, unconscious hate indeed, but nevertheless powerful and exceedingly dangerous, hate on both sides, young and old. Family life produces a wealth of prodigal sons, who like the original Biblical one, show weakness and cowardice and guilt. The brother who stayed at home was quite justified in his objection to the killing of the fatted calf; he must have felt that the younger brother had no right to return, possibly sensed that he was a fool to return, for the elder brother's unconscious wish must have been to flee from the trammels of father authority. Alas, the prodigal son will always come home, if not to the actual home, he will return figuratively, and will in his turn become the little authority in his own home. For he is guilty, unmanned, devoid of responsibility.

Still, there is hope in the new freedom that science has made possible. For one thing youth has the chance at last of seeing the home from the outside, seeing it in perspective, seeing its narrow confines, its parental irritations and quarrels, its arbitrary laws. No one but a child psychologist knows at first hand the tremendous sense of coffining and confining prevalent in children. If this sense of being curbed were all that was in it, the problem would solve itself . . . the children would walk out and come home to eat and sleep. They cannot do that because their attitude is ambivalent. They want to be free and are afraid to be free, want to rebel against the parents and fear the parents, want to have a sex life and are terrified of sex.

This ambivalence is the curse of life. Owing to our family upbringing we are all ambivalent, all trying to compro-

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mise between opposite wishes. When the wishes are conscious we can make some adaptation, but when one of the wishes is unconscious, we become neurotics. "To live or not to live," Hamlet might have said. To be free souls, happy in work and friendship and love, or to be miserable bundles of conflicts, hating ourselves and humanity. It is the challenging question of humanity, and it must be answered. My answer is: abolish the authority in the family. It may not be your answer, but if you reject mine, it is incumbent on you to find your own answer.

### Democracy in the Home

TO DEFINE democracy is difficult. Britain is a democracy: citizens vote for their rulers and after voting have little or no control over the members of parliament they chose. Sometimes it happens that the majority of voters plumps for the party side that does not get in. John Bull can say very much what he likes, and only when he tries to translate his words into action does his democracy step in and stop him. In Hyde Park you can shout: "Away with Park Lane," and the policemen standing by grin, knowing that their job is to see that Park Lane is not abolished. Party politics are a game of cricket with one side batting many overs, and the fielding side patiently waiting for catches, knowing that, however long the game, they will go in to bat. There is never any really fundamental difference between the two sides; they may differ about capitalisation or nationalisation or taxation, but they stand shoulder to shoulder in support of the permanent props of the nation—the church, the master and servant tradi-

tion, the moral attitude to sex and marriage, the belief that schools afford education. If a Prime Minister were an agnostic or a pagan, he would most probably have to put on a chimney hat and attend divine service in St. Paul's if a state occasion demanded one. No member of a British cabinet would be likely to support, let us say, adolescent love freedom. Bevin's foreign policy is almost identical with that of Eden or Churchill. Whatever party is in power Britain remains the same in essentials . . . "There'll always be an England."

Democracy in America seems to be very much the same brand as our home variety. They told me you can buy a six-shooter without a licence; only if you carry it concealed is a licence necessary. They told me that two States, Massachusetts and Connecticut, forbid the sale of contraceptives, owing to the power of the church there. Apparently one can *do* more there than at home, for we have no equivalent of negro lynching so far as I know.

Democracy in U.S.S.R. I know nothing about at first hand, and can only guess that one cannot in Moscow say openly that Stalin or Molotov is wrong, and whether this is overbalanced by the fact that a man cannot exploit the labour of another I am not in a position to say. Political democracy, whatever be its home, has no interest for me, and I question if political democracy can ever spell the brotherhood of man, because there will be gulfs between Park Avenue and the Bowery, Park Lane and East Ham in democratic western countries, and a gulf between military and bureaucratic soft and ordinary folks' hard seats on the Russian railways. What Reich calls Work Democracy is something different. This is not the place to explain his idea, but a quotation from his writings will give a suggestion of his basis. "A physician, in order to

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practise, must demonstrate his theoretical and practical knowledge of medicine. A politician, who, unlike the physician, purposes to decide the fate, not of hundreds of people, but of millions, does not have to show such proof of knowledge. This fact seems to be one of the fundamental reasons for the tragedy which, for thousands of years, has devastated human society with periodic outbreaks. The practical worker, no matter whether from a rich or poor home, has to go through a certain schooling. He is not elected *by the people*. Working people who have proved themselves over years in their profession should determine whether or not the future worker should be a socially potent factor. . . . Every tradesman has to fulfil very strict demands made on his abilities. A politician, on the other hand, is not subject to the necessity of such limitation. All he needs to reach the highest positions in human society, particularly when social conditions are chaotic, are a dose of cleverness, neurotic ambition, and ruthlessness. . . . An unsuccessful housepainter succeeded in holding the world's attention for twenty years, without having accomplished one single useful factual and objective achievement. . . . The world of work continues on its quiet and vitally necessary course. Of the big noise, nothing will remain but a chapter in history books with an erroneous orientation."<sup>1</sup>

Reich wants the people who work to make a democracy that will have as intention "the fulfilment of the biological life functions, of love, work, and knowledge." It seems as if our democracies today want people to live their ordi-

<sup>1</sup> (*Work Democracy versus Politics*, Vol. II, International Journal of Sex-Economy and Orgone Research. Orgone Institute Press, New York, 1943.)

nary work lives outside the province of social policy, and to hand over, by the ballot box, the power to a few men and women who will have the control even of the lives of the voters. Putting it simply, a Stalin or a Truman or an Attlee can order atom bombs to be dropped while carpenters and masons and teachers, the voters, have no power at all; moreover since a carpenter is a good craftsman in Russia and U.S.A. and England, interested primarily in his job, it is incredible that a democracy of carpenters and their like would ever want to drop bombs on each other. If Reich's Work Democracy existed there could be no more wars. It cannot exist today because of the universal self-hate of a civilisation perverted by the emotional plague: the world is ruled by armoured politicians, armoured in Reich's sense of a rigid bodily structure resulting from an anti-life education from the cradle onwards.

Before considering how the family can have its own democracy, I want to describe how democracy works in a school. Summerhill is a self-governing school, that is, everything connected with social life is settled by vote at the Saturday night general meeting. Should football be allowed in the lounge? Staff and children of any age have one vote each. The lounge is under my office and I dislike the noise of football if it is played, as it is, with a small rubber ball. I propose that football indoors be forbidden. I am supported—say—by some of the girls, some older boys, most of the staff. My proposal is not carried, and, at the moment I sit and write this book while the scuffle of feet goes on downstairs. Our democracy makes laws, good ones too. It is forbidden to bathe in the sea without life-savers who are always staff members; to climb on roofs; to use airguns. Bed-times must be kept or there is an automatic

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fine. Whether at a Bank Holiday lessons should stop on the previous Thursday or the Friday is a matter for a show of hands.

On the other hand there are aspects of school life that do not come under the self-government regime. My wife plans the bedrooms, provides the menu, sends out and pays bills. I appoint teachers and ask them to leave if I think they are not suitable, but sometimes the community will ask for the sacking of a teacher who teaches in a dull manner, or, as on one occasion, when a teacher used his lessons to preach Communism . . . the classes came to me complaining that they were not learning their subject, and one boy said: "He is making us all Fascists." That was many years ago. My wife and I decide whether a new building should be erected, or rather we decided in the days when a new building could be erected.

It will be seen that Summerhill cannot be called fully democratic, and, with children paying fees, I cannot see how it could be. They have no economic basis, so that I have heard an anti-social lad grumble: "Why should I dig spuds? My father pays for me to be here," yet, in Wales during the war, when food was scarce, quite a few children did much garden work voluntarily. Economic scarcity welded the community.

A Communist teacher in London described our democracy as Anarchism, but I do not know what he meant, and wonder if he did himself. I expect he meant that we were playing at democracy, that I, the capitalist (a capitalist who too often makes a loss), run the school, giving the children and staff only a shadow which I call democracy. Other schools are trying complete community living, where the staff decides policy-employment of new members, the buying of furniture etc. But I have not heard of

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one that allows the pupils to help choose staff, or to decide whether the kitchen requires new mops.

One feature of Summerhill self-government is that it has no bureaucracy; there is a different chairman at each meeting, and the secretary's job is voluntary. Bed-time officers are seldom in office for more than a few weeks.

It is apparent that there can be some measure of democracy in a school. Can we have a democracy in a home? I cannot imagine a situation in which father, mother, young Tommy and Jean can call a meeting to decide whether the kitchen should be distempered, and, indeed, when Summerhill had only a few pupils, we had benevolent authority rather than self-government. Good self-government in a school is only possible when there are a few adolescents to keep the ball rolling. They are often outvoted, but they want self-government, whereas children up to—say—twelve, left to themselves, will not run it themselves, because they have not reached the social age. Yet even a seven-year-old will never miss a general meeting.

Some schools have tried self-government, the main object being to help the teacher to keep the classes in order. That is a poor form of democracy, and one that could too easily be adopted in a family.

No, voting democracy in a family is impossible. Yet a family can have the spirit of democracy if the parents do not stand to their children as authorities. You cannot have a democratic spirit if there is fear in a home or a school or a nation. Democracy postulates equality, give and take. Let me give you an example of what to me is a family run in a spirit of democracy. Parents Bill and Cynthia, called by their Christian names by Peter, Jane and John, ages fourteen, ten, and six respectively, middle class but not bourgeois in outlook.

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They gave their children no sex repressions, nor did they rear them so that they would be approved of by the neighbours over the wall. The home is far from being Arcadian: there often arises difference of opinion. . . . Peter wants to hammer when old dad is trying to have a Sunday afternoon nap, and dad naturally shouts at him to stop that infernal row. Peter and Jane protest against the parental liking for symphony concerts when they want to listen in to swing jazz. They are constantly adapting themselves to each other, both sides winning and giving way. Peter tells his father how silly he is to smoke, and Jane has begun to choose her own clothes, criticising her mother's taste. In such a family youth and age can live happily, for there is no false dignity, adult aloofness, hypocrisy, sentimental emotion. When Peter begins to come in latish at night his parents will not ask him where he has been; they know the amount of lying they had to do to their own parents when they had been out for the evening. Punishment does not arise in such a family; usually the law makes the crime in a bad home, a bad school, or a bad civilisation. There is love in a home like that.

The home I have described in brief is the hope of humanity. The children of that home came to Summerhill, and showed a charity, friendliness, sense of fair play that was unique. . . . I have suitably disguised the family by altering the names and ages, lest on reading this it gets swelled head. I add that the parents never gave any suggestion, never advised their children to study certain subjects with a certain aim, never censored their reading or film seeing, never censored their choice of companions. There was real reciprocity: when Peter criticised his father's waste of money on cigarettes, the father grinned and

said: "What about your wasting money on your beastly swing records?"

There is an increasing friendliness between parents and children, in all classes. Many families resemble the one I have described, but they are non-religious families. You cannot "honour thy father and mother" and criticise what they do. You cannot have a god in the heavens without having a minor one saying grace at breakfast, nor can you believe in freedom and religion at the same time. The terms are contradictory; no man can be free if he relies on an outside god, whether that god is Hitler or the God of the churches.

It sometimes happens that a neurotic child will come from a home that looks democratic and free, but in my own experience I have found that happen most often in homes where the parents began wrong, and later realised what freedom was. The neurotic element began in the very early days when the parents did not know enough about child nature, and carried on the tradition of authority in which they themselves had been nurtured. The new families using self-regulation for their babies will have a much better chance of being normal. And, of course, if modern parents are only intellectually believers in freedom, the children feel, by seeing their facial expressions and hearing the tones of their voices, that freedom is only lip service. Lip service is not very satisfactory at any time. I have friends who praise my school publicly, but they send their own children to other schools less revolutionary. I make the remark without complaint, for I had rather deal with the children of strangers than with those of my good friends . . . always excepting the old pupils who send their own children. Lip service may mean lack of courage;

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it usually means conscious approval along with unconscious doubt. We all give some lip service, if only to make social life bearable, but I am glad to say that no one in Summerhill ever has to give it inside the school.

The sad fact is that many families have to teach their members to be conscious hypocrites outside the home. I sometimes have to advise a small child not to say bloody in the presence of Aunt Jemima, and parents have to do likewise. So long as it is conscious hypocrisy no great harm is done if the child knows that his parents are behind him and against the outside factor that demands pretence. You should have seen me on the Atlantic crossings recently, listening politely to priests and rabbis and conventional schoolmasters. Not considering it my job to argue with them, I was a good listener, a friendly listener. I felt, however, the warmth in them and in myself, the human decency that is outwith creeds and theories. It is that inner warmth that the democratic family can encourage, and does encourage in a hateful world.

Here I suddenly think of the analysts who assume that if you preach strongly against anything, you are repressing that thing, so that in preaching against hate I am fighting against the hate in myself. I agree with them; I have hate in me, much hate. Originally I suppose it was attached to people, those who thwarted me, disciplined me, punished me. It may be that today I have reached the further stage of hating, not individuals, but mass movements that militate against happiness and freedom. I hope so, and the fact that I have had a school for twenty-seven years, a school in which hate is never shown to pupils, is perhaps a proof. One can hate murder without hating poor Crippen, can hate Fascism without hating Mosley, Communism without hating Stalin. The political hangings today

suggest that the masses are hating not systems but the individuals who uphold the systems. Only when a system is dead does the killing of the individual cease: they killed Christ because his system was alive and dangerous to their smug life, but no one today would think of crucifying an archbishop or a Pope, because religion is not dangerous to modern smugness. When an enthusiastic follower of Krishnamurti said that he was a modern Christ, a psychologist friend of hers remarked quietly: "Then why hasn't society crucified him?" Society never will, because he is not challenging effectively the armoured hates of humanity, and, indeed, Krishnamurti himself would passionately deny that he is a Christ or ever wants to be one.

I have drifted away from my subject again—the family. Inevitably, for the family is only a small unit in the great family of mankind, a small unit indeed, but an important one, a powerful one, for, as the family is, so will be the nation. If hate is in the home it is in the market place and the church and the school. Only fools talk of abolishing the family. It is the natural unit, the necessary nursery for parental love. But one is not a fool if one sees that the family has dangers that go outwards to the larger family. We shall never have a good democracy until a real democratic feeling obtains in every home. The hymn asks: "Can a mother's tender care, Cease towards the child she bare?" What is wrong with humanity is that the answer too often is: Yes; every spanking proves it, every Verbot, every disapproval. All the same, thinking of the good families, I say optimistically that things are moving onwards, and freedom is coming to more children daily.

## The Working-Class Family

ONE does not need to be a prophet to realise that the working class is coming to power tomorrow. Atomic warfare or no, capitalism as a system is going for ever, and with it the division into three classes, lower, middle, upper. Classes are economically determined today, and tomorrow classes will possibly evolve as a result of common interests, for in a socialist world professors of Greek will not be likely to have common interests with radio mechanics, and bureaucrats will be likely to keep themselves apart and claim special privileges. This is all speculation. The only certain feature is that a class that has been exploited for generations is about to assume complete control of the world. Ultimately it will be a better world, a juster world, a more peaceful world. The transition stage is the one that will interest us most, for none of us is likely to live to see the ideal world community, and that transition state is to be in the hands of the working class of today and the immediate tomorrow. What will the new power

do? We can only guess, and my own guess is that the transition stage will be hateful and revengeful and uncharitable. I give again my illustration of the chained dog. The proletariat has been chained for years, and thereby has been starved of real freedom, interesting work, true education.

"You have nothing to lose but your chains," cried the old slogan of revolution. Right, but when chains are taken off, what then? I see it in my school. Children from chained schools come, and, finding freedom for the first time, they react in an exaggerated way; they swear, destroy, cheek; they have no initiative, and, when free to attend lessons or stay away, have no will to decide, and when they do go to lessons they demand to be spoonfed. Their school lives have been governed by bells that told them what to do and where to go. It takes some time for them to become sincere, busy little people.

It is probable that an unchained proletariat will react in very much the same way emotionally. Working-class education has been a sham, a trick to keep revolution down by teaching them to obey, to be inferior, to leave school at fourteen to swell the volume of cheap labour. The workers have been deprived of culture. Any manager of a working-class district cinema will tell you that he loses heavily if he shows a film like *Brief Encounter* or *Henry V*; his box-office receipts depend on trite Hollywood films with happy endings. A friend of mine, a draughtsman in a factory, sounds the girls in the shop about the current film in the local picture-house, and when they agree that it is lousy, he goes to see it, and, says he, generally finds it good. The bookshop in a small industrial town shows the lack of any good reading; a high percentage of books are crime stories, and in such a shop window recently I counted twenty-four books with the word *Murder* on them. Naturally; elemen-

tary school leaves the emotions undeveloped, and when these working-class children leave school, their undeveloped emotions must seek an outlet in what is cheap, tawdry, divorced from life; indeed, the box-office film is the one that takes the poor away in phantasy to a world of rich people, beautiful dresses, romantic love scenes.

One has to guard against class snobbery in oneself. I can get on with all kinds of manual workers; especially when they talk about their work, I am always interested. But I could not live with them, because we would have few common interests, and that is not necessarily snobbery, for I had much rather mix with plumbers and masons than with hunting squires, with whom I could not possibly have any common interest. I felt happier travelling on the *Queen Elizabeth* and the *Queen Mary* third class than I would have done travelling first. I belong to the middle class, the lower middle class, since I am a teacher (but on my passport I call myself an author: an author is a gentleman while a teacher is almost a gentleman): there is a gulf between my class and both higher and lower class, a gulf in interest and culture and manners . . . I never feel comfortable in the presence of a butler, or of Public School men who jump from their chairs every time a woman rises to open a door. I prefer the manners of the working class, which are less artificial and therefore more sincere. So let me rule out snobbery in this context. Let me try to be objective. Let me attempt to describe a typical working-class family.

It talks either in dialect or with an accent. In Scotland only the middle class talks English as it is written; in my native Angus every ploughman talks broad dialect, and the difference between a smallholder and a big farmer is often seen in the language; the big farmer talks English

with a broad accent, but he does not talk dialect. This language business is important; the way you speak in our class society determines to a large extent your place in that society. I have known more than one clever lad lose a job because he had a cockney or a Lancashire accent, but it is odd that a Scots or an Irish accent is more often a help than a hindrance. I do not know why the working class retains its special accent, but, for that matter, I do not know why people retain an Oxford accent. I do not know why some Labour cabinet ministers like to drop their h's, unless it is a sign of their pride in belonging to the working class. Speech is more ungrammatical in the working class than in the middle or upper classes, and that is mainly due to the fact that, while poor boys leave school at fourteen, upper-class boys stay on until they are seventeen or eighteen; it is also due to the example upper-class children are shown by their parents and teachers.

The working-class family has an inferiority in clothes. It can never buy the best material, and on any railway platform one can see at a glance who is working class and who isn't. Clothes are usually poorly cut. Footwear is cheap and shoddy. Physical features are, in the main, inferior, owing to poor food and poor housing, and of course to hard manual labour, for you cannot be a horny-handed son of toil and look like a Bond Street man-about-town.

In the family there is much that is bad . . . the stupid little lies to keep the children in order, the fear of neighbourly opinion concerning respectability, the slappings and spankings from harassed mothers and tired fathers. Yet in essence there is usually more freedom for children in a working-class home than in a suburban home. The children are much more out of doors for one thing; they are not so much disciplined into excessive washing, not

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taught so many stiff manners, not given that super respectability that suburbia specialises in. They are often nearer to their parents than are suburban children.

I recall my own boyhood. My father, as the village schoolmaster, was middle class, and we had to speak English in the home, while we spoke dialect with our playmates. We were always being told that we had to live up to our status. We had miserably to break off games in the evenings when father blew a whistle calling us in to study for examinations, envying the country boys whose parents had no ambition for them: they could continue the game till the dark stopped it. True, we became teachers and doctors and ministers while they remained hard manual workers, but whether we found more happiness in life than they did is doubtful. We found a wider life, certainly, but not necessarily a more useful one.

The working-class attitude to sexuality is, if anything, worse than that of the other classes. Nakedness to the workers is something shocking. In a family the members never see each others' bodies, partly because pyjamas are not always donned at bed-time; quite a few workers go to bed in their drawers. Sex is not so much suppressed as ignored. Few workers would ever tell a child not to masturbate; they hardly need to, for the child unconsciously senses the antagonism to sex, and feels that the subject is outwith the bounds of respectable family life. Few workers tell their children the truth about birth, and those who do hardly ever tell of the part father plays in birth.

Modesty is well entrenched in the working-class home. According to Reich this is the result of a carefully-planned education from the masters of society. They use the elementary schools to discipline the workers in such a way that they are symbolically castrated for life, the aim being

to continue the privileges of the rich, who will be safe with an under class that has been unmanned and therefore has not the guts to rebel. Reich is right; but things have not worked out as the masters thought they would; their castrated victims are rebelling, are on the point of conquering *in the economic sphere*. The department in which the masters won was in the sexual sphere. Their education made the workers anti-sex, ultra moral . . . and that is why I fear the transition stage between Capitalism and Communism. The Communists I meet are not a whit more free emotionally than are the Blimps of life, and remember that the Blimps, while castrating the workers, could not help castrating themselves at the same time.

One disturbing feature about some Communists is that they dismiss education and sex with a wave of the hand. . . . "Humph, let's get the economic factor right and then we'll deal with them." I say they can't deal with them by solving the economic factor alone, for abolishing private profit will not help humanity to approve of private parts. I sometimes wonder if the wave of sex freedom that swept over Russia in the early days of the October revolution was due to the enlightened educated class that played so great a part in it. I also wonder if the gradual suppression of youth sex, together with the abolition of self-government and co-education in the schools, was due to the acquired hate of sex that the risen workers had sucked with their mothers' milk. It is likely that, miraculously given a Communist Britain tomorrow, national sex repression would continue exactly as it is today. Religion would be thrown out of secular education, and mysticism would be discouraged, but the sex morality of religion and of mysticism would be retained for, I fear, some generations. The economic solution is necessary, laudable, but it is not enough.

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It will solve the work problem; it will give workers' wives refrigerators, but it will not increase by an ounce the chances of inner happiness in the individual. Thousands of women in the U.S.A. have all the electric gadgets they wish for in their kitchens, but their inner conflicts, their love lives, are too often unsatisfactory. American millionaires with their Cadillacs are no happier in their inner lives than are Covent Garden porters. The Communist answer to this is not good enough . . . he contends that the rich are not happy in their possessions because they have the guilty feeling that they have them at the expense of the exploited poor. That is not the answer: nay, the answer is that no man can enjoy economic comfort or security if his soul is anti-life and anti-love. The rich man and the poor man have this in common, that they have both been reared in a world that disapproves of love, fears love, makes love an obscene joke. Capitalism had its innings and failed to score; Communism is about to have its innings, and, unless it tackles the inner man at the same time as it tackles the collective factory or farm, it also will fail to score. Tractors and shop stewards will not conquer the sickness of humanity.

I lay myself open to the accusation: "This man has sex on the brain. Sex isn't everything in life. There is friendship, work, joy and sorrow. Why sex?"

I answer: Sex affords the highest pleasure in life; it is the supreme form of ecstasy. It is obviously hated, otherwise no mother would forbid masturbation, no father forbid a sexual life outside conventional marriage; otherwise there would be no obscene jokes in music-halls. Nor would the public waste its time seeing love films and reading love stories. The fact that nearly a hundred per cent of films deal with love proves that sex is the most important

factor in life. The interest in these films is in the main neurotic; it is an interest that only a sex-guilty, sex-frustrated population can value. Unable to love naturally because of sex-guilt, people flock to film stories that make love romantic, sometimes even beautiful; the sex-repressed live out their sex by proxy. No man, no woman with a full love life could be bothered sitting twice a week in a picture-house. So with popular novels; they either deal with sex or crime, usually a combination of the two, to judge from any railway bookstall. A very popular novel, *Gone with the Wind*, is a favourite, not because of the background of the tragedy of the Civil War and the slaves, but because it centres round a tiresome, ego-centric girl and her love affairs. A book of genius, *The House with the Green Shutters*, by George Douglas Brown, has remained a classic read by a small minority. It has no love affair in it. "All the world loves a lover," but he must be a respectable lover, never hinting that the end of the film kiss is not the consummation of love. Fashion journals, cosmetics, leg-shows in revues, sex stories . . . scores of examples could be given . . . all show clearly that sex is the most important thing in life, and at the same time prove that only the trappings of sex are approved of; in other words, fiction, films, leg-shows etc., are the sublimation of sex. A cynical friend of mine defined sublimation as: "Getting excited by a woman's ankles and rushing off to paint the scullery door."

It was D. H. Lawrence who pointed out the iniquity of sex films, when the sex-repressed youth, fearful of girls in his circle, showered all his sex emotion on a Hollywood star . . . and went home to masturbate. Lawrence, of course, did not mean that masturbation is wrong; he surely meant that it is unhealthy sex that seeks masturbation with the

phantasy of a film star: healthy sex would seek a partner in the neighbourhood. Healthy sex would kill Hollywood and depopulate Elstree. Think of the enormous vested interests that thrive on repressed sex . . . the fashion-plate people, the lipstick merchants, the Church, the theatres and cinemas, the best-seller novelists, and the stocking manufacturers. Up till quite recently one never saw a Girl Guide without her black purity stockings. It would be foolish to say that a society sexually free would abolish beautiful clothes; of course not; every woman would want to look her best before the man she loved; every man would like to appear elegant when he trysted his girl.

What would disappear would be fetishism, the valuing the shadow because the reality is forbidden. Sex-repressed men would no longer stare at women's shoes in shop windows. But enough of illustrations. The highest pleasure in the world is enjoyed with guilt. This becomes diffused; it enters into every aspect of human life, making life narrow, unhappy, hateful. Hate sex and you hate life; hate sex and you cannot love your neighbour. If you hate sex your sexual life will be at the worst impotent or frigid, at the best, incomplete, hence the often-said remark, especially by women who have had children . . . "Sex is an over-rated pastime." If sex is unsatisfactory it must go somewhere, for it is too strong an urge to annihilate. It goes into anxiety and hate, not that hate is the opposite of love; the opposite of love is indifference; hate is the other side of the love coin, or better, it is chained-dog love. Thus a sadist who can torture a Jew can quite sincerely love his dog or his cat. There is love in everyone, even the most repressed.

The extreme forms of sex hate are seen in sadism. No man with a good sex life could possibly torture animal or

human, or support prisons, or shoot a political opponent. No sex-satisfied women would condemn the mother of a bastard. And since humanity is full of sex-repressed adults, I say that Communism is not enough, for Socialists, however much they storm against churches and Christian morality, have the same hate attitude to the body that the ascetics have. Personally I want to have Socialism, and at the same time fear its application by men and women who are anti-sex. I want Socialism plus sex-economy, nationalisation plus relaxed bodies, for if the body is relaxed the chances are that the psyche is pretty free. I say that the working class of today has not got the required absence of sex repression, and, indeed, it would be miraculous if it had, after so long a period of economic and moral repression. The big question is how to free the coming rulers of their negative attitude to sex and life. Writing books will not free them, popular education will not free them, for their teachers are sex-repressed themselves. I have already quoted Reich as saying that, only when the people realise that their cancer and diseases are due to sex repression, will they fashion a new morality that approves of love. It may be, but that means a long, long time to wait, and a bitter fight against all those who have a vested interest in sickness.

Few will accept the Reich viewpoint that the sickness of humanity is due to its hate of sex. Nature cure enthusiasts will answer that the main cause of ill-health is wrong food. The two theories are not incompatible. We can, with some imagination to be sure, divide people into those who are on the side of life and those who are against life. Without knowing anything about science, people tend to accept inorganic artificial manures, or to put their faith in the compost way of putting back into the soil what grew in

the soil. There is the same division with regard to sickness; the great majority accept drugs and vaccines and inoculations as right and proper, while a small minority treats disease with raw greens, fruit, cold compresses and so on. Having no scientific knowledge of Reich's Orgone Theory, I have a natural desire to believe in it, simply because while atomic energy is deadly, or at best mechanical, orgone energy is being used by some doctors in the U.S.A. as an experimental means of curing diseases. My life work has been one of allowing the life force of children to have full play, fighting all the time against the dead hand of education, the dead hand that, paradoxically, wields the cane. Hence I am inclined to see life in black and white, to see the orgone *versus* the atom, composted manure *versus* artificial, sex *versus* the repression of sex, the live green food *versus* the dead drug or the synthetic vitamin. It may be all emotional prejudice, yet I have an idea that it has worked out well in practice.

In Summerhill, some years ago, we built a sanitarium, with large glass windows; we built it with our own hands . . . and local bricklayers say it is nearly perpendicular. We seldom used it, and it is now a dormitory. If children have happiness, balanced food, and fresh air they do not get sick . . . touch wood! By the time this is in print we may have had to revert to a sanitarium again. But even if we do, I can claim that in twenty-six years we have had very little sickness, and I think the reason is that we are on the side of the living process, for we do approve of the flesh. We have used fresh milk all these years, never pasteurised milk, and I never heard of any pupil's catching T.B. after leaving school. Note that I put happiness before diet; I think it is happiness that makes, according to visitors' testimony, our girls look attractive, our boys handsome. True,

they are middle class, yet tomorrow there will be no middle class, and the children of the poorest worker will have the chance of happiness, food, and fresh air.

To return to the question of sex versus food as the root of humanity's sickness, I hold that sex comes first. Bad food is the product of a mechanised philosophy, for what sane society would advertise vitamin pills when there was lettuce or whole-wheat bread to eat? Eating raw greens may be an important item in curing kidney disease, but all the greens in the world won't touch the sickness of the soul which is due to repression. True, getting rid of neurosis does not automatically lead to a balanced diet. I take the broad view that a man with a balanced diet can warp his children by moralising, whereas an unneurotic man will not and cannot, and my experience of schools leads me to conclude that warped children are less healthy physically than free children. A balanced humanity would naturally have a balanced diet.

I have much faith in the new generation of teachers whose classes are composed of working-class children. Especially do I welcome the spirit of the men and women in the Emergency Training Colleges, youths mostly who have come out of the forces with a new angle on life. They are refusing to adopt the old idea of education; they are keen as mustard, and many of them have dropped old illusions. Some will lose their enthusiasm when they go out to teach in depressing schools in depressed areas; they will find that they cannot apply their humane methods to large classes, or be free to experiment under reactionary heads. I think that most of them will stick to their beliefs, and carry them over to the schools. Many of them stem from the working class, and they will keep in touch with that class. The men and women who saw death in France or Burma

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will want to promote life in Limehouse or Walthamstow.

To me these Emergency College students are the hope of education. A student at an ordinary Teachers' Training College wrote me recently saying: "In the College library we have the books of American and foreign educators. We have none of yours. Why?" I answered that it is probably because I am not an educator; I have nothing to offer to teachers who want to learn new methods of teaching arithmetic, who want to know about school method or how to keep discipline. I cannot see the wood for trees, the child for adults, I am interested in life, not schools, and the young students have a like interest. Whether that interest will grow strong enough to influence the people who think in terms of politics and economics I do not know. Reich may be right: it may be that only a realisation of the sickness of humanity, physical and psychical, will compel man to start again with a clean slate, or better with a slate with freedom writ large on the wooden frame.

## Curing Problem Children

THE other night I saw a film called *Children on Trial*, the story of a slum lad who was sent to an Approved School. I assumed that the school was a special filmland one, and it looked good. The fact that it had hymn-singing was a little disconcerting, and when the superintendent, almost in despair over the slum lad, threatened him with the stick, I knew that the psychological basis of the story was wrong. One other lad's reformation seemed to date from the moment when the superintendent discovered that he was a cinematograph expert and put him on to mending the apparatus that broke down during a show, and, here again, the false psychology betrayed itself, for the superintendent had to say, "Mind you don't spoil it," showing the lad that he wasn't trusted. The film gave me the impression of rather smug morality in power, and of course there was no co-education in it: the bad girl went to her own segregated school where she was reformed chiefly by being given a job she liked. The moral of the

story was, to me, catch your problem and then get him interested in some sort of work, and all will be well. It sounds too simple. Obviously in the film story the homes were bad, the hero's home, hopeless in that it had a slovenly mother living in poverty and filth. The contrast was made between the dirty home and the orderly school. Fine, all on the right track, but woefully lacking in understanding of child psychology. Did the hero have guilt feelings about masturbation, stealing, religion, disloyalty to his erring mother? The film didn't say.

I have no first-hand knowledge of Approved Schools or Borstals. I take it they are not being run on the lines of Homer Lane's Little Commonwealth, a colony of delinquents in Dorset, closed in 1917, and I ask why not? Thirty years onward from then apparently an Approved School can use the stick, can still encourage problem children to be good, thirty years after Lane showed that talking was useless, that only action counted. When Jabez expressed an angry wish to smash up the cups and saucers on the tea table, Lane handed him the poker and told him to carry on. Jabez carried on . . . and next day came to ask for a better paid job. Lane asked why he wanted a better paid job.

"Cos I want to pay for them cups and saucers," said Jabez.

Lane, like every other man, had his limitations. His New England Puritanism betrayed itself in his fear of sex relations between adolescents; his later practice of psychoanalysis was a brilliant display of interpretation of dream material that too often touched only the patient's intellect. But in the understanding and handling of delinquent children he was a genius. He cured because he gave out love, love all the time. He always looked for the hidden motive, claiming that behind every crime was a wish

that had been originally a good one. He held that to get rid of a complex one should live it out, and in the case of the cup-smashing Jabez, said that the action of smashing brought a load of Jabez's inhibitions and constellation stumbling to the ground. And the fact that for the first time in his life the boy was smashing when *encouraged by authority*, must have had a great emotional effect. Lane's work was full of dramatic moments with children. It is a bitter criticism of our society today to say that, while tons of paper are used to stock our bookshops with sensational rubbish, to send out circulars by the thousand to football pool clientele.

The Little Commonwealth failed fundamentally because society was not ready for it. Society as represented by judges, magistrates, teachers, parsons, desires reform for the delinquent, but only after repentance and punishment, but any method of reclaiming the young criminal will have ultimately to follow the Lane method of curing by being on the side of the problem child.

Any method will have its successes; I do not doubt but that the old training ship flogging method had some successes . . . if we measure success, as they did in the film *Children on Trial*, by their being able to take a job later. That is not success, or if it is it is a very minor success; real success would be the conversion of the young criminal into a balanced, sincere, uninhibited citizen, loving life instead of hating it.

I have great respect for the social workers who enter the homes of problem slum children, the welfare officers especially. They are doing a fine work. But does their work go deep enough? No one expects them to psychoanalyse the mothers and fathers; everyone knows that their work is sadly uphill, for they cannot abolish the slums that make

children anti-social, their parents ignorant and shiftless; that stunt growth by bad feeding and make sex a matter of sordid adventures in dark closets. The welfare workers are heroes and heroines. I take it that they embrace all kinds of people, moralists, a-moralists, repressers of sex, believers in sex freedom, yet they have in common the hope of helping youth to overcome the evils that have been forced upon it. Even if a social worker had complete belief in freedom, how could he or she apply it in a slum home? One could say to a mother: "Mrs. Green, your son is stealing because his drunken father beats him, because you spanked him at the age of two for touching his penis, because you have never showed him any love." Mrs. Green might very well answer: "So what?" And I ask: "So what?"

I do not say that the woman cannot be re-educated, but I do say that she cannot be re-educated by the talk of a social worker . . . nor of anyone else. Here the problem is economic.

At very least the start should be made by abolishing the slum, for I take it that there are more criminals in slum-land than in suburbia. . . . Yet abolishing slums alone will never eliminate the mentality that obtains in the slums. In any industrial town children are treated in their homes with the ignorance of child nature that dwells in the slums. Children in Ipswich or Norwich are not handled differently from children in a London or Glasgow slum, and if there are fewer anti-social gangs in Chelmsford than in Dundee, it is chiefly because the homes in Chelmsford are more livable-in than those of Dundee slums; the slum child spends more time on the wrong street. The cure for juvenile delinquency is, economically, to raise the standard of living and housing, and educationally to abolish, along with the slums, the barrack school with its discipline and

uncreativity. This means that the social worker has as much chance of curing delinquency as has the Salvation Army lass of curing drunkenness in a dock area.

Approved Schools should be co-educational, because life is co-educational. They should be self-governing like The Little Commonwealth, and the superintendent should be a child psychologist of long experience. Work as a criterion should give way to happiness and social approval. The latter is of the utmost importance. We all want to be liked by our neighbours, admired by them, approved of by them. Lane found that when a new boy came to the Commonwealth he sought the approval of his fellows, generally using the technique he had used in his slum street; he boasted of his misdeeds, his cleverness in lifting from shops, his prowess in dodging policemen. When he found he was boasting to youths who had got over that form of seeking social approval, he was nonplussed, often contemptuously dismissing his new companions as sissies. Gradually his natural love of approval forced him to seek the approval of his new environment, and, without any individual analysis by Lane, he adapted himself and in a few months was a social being.

This social approval loses its value when a school staff is authoritative. Then there is no real freedom, no equality . . . the boys in the film called the chief "Sir." If a teacher has to be called "Sir" the pupil has a dual social purpose, to be approved of by authority and also by his fellows. When staff and pupils form one homogeneous body of social opinion, then, and only then can social approval have value. In my school the new pupils, coming from schools where they had to respect authority, address me as Mister, and only when they discover that I am not an authority do they drop the Mister and call me Neill. They

never seek to get my personal approval, only that of the whole community, but in the days when I was a village dominie in Scotland, any child would gladly stay behind to help me clean up or prune a hedge, seeking, insincerely, my approval because I was the boss. No child in Summerhill ever does anything to gain my approval, although any visitors today might have concluded otherwise when they saw me with six boys and girls pruning a hedge; the motive had nothing to do with me; they worked because a general-meeting law had been passed that everyone over twelve had to do two hours' garden work weekly.

I emphasise this natural desire for approval in any society. The criminal is he who has lost his desire, or rather has been forced to change the desire for approval into its opposite, the contempt for society. The criminal is always egoist No. 1 . . . "Let me get rich quick and to hell with society." Prison sentences merely armour his egoism, for they make him by compulsion a lone bird, brooding on himself and the horrible society that punishes him. They cannot reform the criminal because they are a proof of hate to the criminal; they eliminate entirely the chance of becoming social because of the approval of the others around. The convict dare not speak to the other convicts, and he is unlikely to seek the approval of the governor and warders. This insane, inhuman prison system stands condemned because it does not touch anything of value psychologically in the prisoner.

Hence I say that the first essential in any reform school is the chance of social approval. Open your Borstal gates as widely as you please, so long as boys have to salute overseers, stand in military lines, jump up if the superintendent enters the room, there is no freedom there, no chance of social approval.

The uneasy question arises: Can a sick society set up

healthy schools for young crooks? Will they not all be compromises, compromises with some outer freedom, but with rules and habits that restrict inner freedom? From all accounts the present reform schools are compromises. So far as I know there is not a single Little Commonwealth run by the Home Office in these isles, not a school that has complete faith in adolescents, believing in original goodness, and practising therapy actively without moral talks and examples. Is there any Approved School that has abolished authority from above? Any school in which a boy can say to the headmaster: "Smith, you are a damn fool"? Or, putting the question in another way, is there an Approved School that is really democratic? I don't know; I merely ask. I ask because to me respect for a headmaster is an artificial lie, demanding insincerity; when we give respect we do so unawares. My pupils can call me a silly ass any time they like; they respect me because I respect their young lives, not because I am the headmaster, not because I am on a pedestal, a dignified tin god. We have mutual respect for each other. We approve of each other.

I repeat again that you cannot cure anti-social youth by individual analysis. There are not enough analysts, and talking is less valuable than doing. The cure must be done by community living. True, there are few Homer Lanes about, few believers in the innate goodness of humanity, but we have enough to start with . . . but not in Approved Schools. The word school should be eliminated, for too many children have a complex about schools. As a nation we could set up many communities in the country; we could buy mansions, keeping the original name of the estate, thus by-passing names that have a more or less sinister significance to children, names like School, Home, Institution, Borstal, yet the biggest problem would be to by-pass institutionalism and character moulding. The

houses we could provide. . . . I don't know how, and can only suggest that the nationalisation of football pools, horse and dog racing, football gate-money would provide money enough to set up a thousand communities. Yes, we could have the material factor without much trouble.

But, as I say, who will be able to run the new youth colonies? The troublesome thought arises, that erring youth is being sacrificed to our adult inability to agree about a plan. A bishop would rely on religion to reform the delinquent; another might put his money on the providing of interesting work of a constructive kind; yet another might advocate Eurhythmyics or Art or Music: and I would demand self-government without authority. Compromise would form us into a committee and the resulting community would be the thing portrayed by the film *Children on Trial*. The bishop and I would quarrel at every committee meeting. His God would be in the heavens, while mine would be in the heart of the delinquent. Mrs. Grundy (on the committee) would be suspicious of the art master's aesthetics, and would demand that Eurhythmyics should be done in long stockings. Colonel Blimp (also on the committee of course) would want to introduce the stick. . . . "I had it in my youth, and, damme, sir, it did me good." Pardon; I have a complex about committees.

Yet, complex or no, the truth is that the delinquent suffers because we cannot make up our minds on a common policy. The Little Commonwealth was closed because an adolescent girl ran away after stealing. When caught by the police she made the excuse that Lane had assaulted her sexually. The Home Office sent down a learned K.C. to investigate; he found no evidence against Lane, but apparently didn't like the free system, for the Home Office decided that they would withdraw its licence if the committee did not appoint another superintendent in Lane's

stead. The committee, knowing that Lane would never assault any girl, chose rather to close down the Commonwealth. It was a good committee of understanding people. Here was an instance of a small committee's being overruled by a great committee—the State. The State killed the greatest experiment in community therapy that this country has ever known, killed it because it was unorthodox, humane, psychological: killed it, and continued with its own hateful methods of punishment. It is a tragic thought that any man with a new message can be killed because of one instance of world neurosis. We all know of cases where a brilliant politician was ruined because of some love affair that got publicity. Every teacher or physician who deals with neurotics, juvenile or adult, has the chance of being ruined by a patient. In the days when I dealt with problems I sometimes got a neurotic girl of the day-dreaming type who told me incredible stories of men who had sexually assaulted her. They were phantasy stories, and highly dangerous to me, for the next phantasy might have been about myself. I always took immediate steps to tell the doctor or teacher who had sent such a girl that she might accuse me. No girl ever did.

The danger of this kind would be great in a community with a pioneer superintendent if the place were for one sex only. Homosexuality raises its head easily when there is segregation of the sexes, and a humane head might easily inspire sex phantasies in a neurotic boy. Only a very enlightened committee would appreciate the danger the head was in, and back him up against evil report. It is possible that public opinion would force the head's resignation.

I may seem to be over-estimating the dangers in treating delinquency with love instead of hate. I do not think I am. The battle for youth is one with the gloves off. None of us

can be neutral; we must take one side or the other, authority or freedom, discipline or self-government. No half measures will do; the situation is too urgent. The ultimate cure for juvenile delinquency lies in the curing society of moral delinquency, and its concomitant, immoral indifference. We have to take one side or the other, and the two sides are before our eyes: either we treat delinquent youth in the birching, caning way of the unwisdom of Solomon, or we give youth the loving method of the Little Commonwealth. No middle way is good enough, for the middle way is insincere; it is the way of the stick on Saturday and church parade on Sunday, and even if the stick is not there, and there is benevolent authority, the middle way is a compromise.

I do not ask that psychology be applied to all problem children, but I do ask that everyone who deals with them should realise what psychology teaches. All schools of psychology agree to recognise the hypothesis of the unconscious, the submission that we all have buried wishes and loves and hates that we are not conscious of. Character is a combination of conscious and unconscious. The house-breaking youth is conscious that he wants to acquire money or goods, but he does not know the deep motive that makes him choose this way of getting money instead of the social way of earning it. That motive is buried, and that is why moral lectures or punishments never cure him; they are heard only by his ears, or felt by his body; they never get down to the underneath motive. Religion, that is, preached religion cannot reach his unconscious, but if his curate went out stealing with him one night, the action would touch the unconscious. The cure of more than one young thief began when I joined him stealing our neighbour's hens or helped him rob the pocket-money drawer. Action touches the unconscious when words cannot.

In analysis a complex is supposed to be cured when the memory of the original cause is discovered, but there is no cure unless the memory is accompanied by the original emotion that the cause aroused. Fortunately there are grounds for supposing that a complex can be overcome without becoming aware of the original trauma. Love and approval will cure much neurosis. I do not say that they will cure a case of—say—acute claustrophobia, or one of marked sadism, but they will cure most young thieves and liars and destroyers. I have proved in action that freedom and the absence of moral guidance have cured many children whose future had appeared to be one of prison sentences. True freedom seems to do for the mass what analysis does for the individual; it releases hidden hindrances; it is a breath of fresh air blowing through the soul. It is no discovery of mine; Lane knew it, and the infinitely greater than Lane, Jesus, knew it. The miracles may all be fairy tales, yet Jesus must have had the curing touch for he gave out love all the time and to give out love is to show that one respects the freedom of another.

Since writing the above words about complexes that can be cured without reviving the original memories of their cause, I have learned that in Orgone Therapy this is certainly the case. The releasing of somatic tension may or may not revive infantile memories. This fact is a great discovery, a discovery that makes psychoanalysis with its talk and symbols and dream interpretation an unsatisfactory technique. Since, however, we cannot give the children of the world Orgone Therapy en masse, I hold that prophylaxis is our main hope, and that self-regulation is the royal road to health and happiness.

*Children on Trial. Nay, the Family on Trial, Society on Trial, the World on Trial.*

## C H A P T E R   X X

### Any Questions?

I GET so many questions from parents, by word and by correspondence, that I shall take the liberty of forming a one-man Brains Trust in this chapter. Many of the questions include a criticism, generally on these lines. . . . "You are sitting pretty in your school with nothing to do but attend to children whereas I have three kids about my feet when I have to do the household chores, and, try as much as I can, I can't possibly treat them psychologically every time." And a very fair criticism too, although I am not sitting quite so pretty as the harassed mothers think, for I live in much noise, much wear and tear; in term time if I lay down a hammer and go off to elevenses I may find when I return that Billie, aged six, has purloined it for a job of his own. I grant, however, that it is easier for me than for the housewife. I think that the new mothers who give self-regulation to their babies will have an easier time than the present generation.

A great amount of naughtiness is due to the wrong

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method of handling. My Zoë went through a period of great interest in my glasses, snatching them off my nose to see what they were like. I made no protest, showed no annoyance by look or tone of voice. She has lost interest in my glasses now, and never touches them. No doubt if I had sternly told her not to, or worse, spanked her little hand, her interest in my glasses would have survived mingled with fear of me and rebellion against me. My wife lets her play with breakable ornaments, and the child handles them carefully and seldom breaks anything. She is finding things out for herself. Obviously there is a limit to self-regulation, for we cannot allow a baby of six months to discover that a lighted cigarette-end burns painfully. It is wrong to shout in alarm in such a case; the right thing to do is to remove the danger without any fuss. Unless a child is mentally defective he will soon discover what interests him, and, left free from excited cries and angry voices, he will be unbelievably sensible in his dealing with material of all kinds. The harassed mother standing at the gas stove, frantic about what the children are doing in the passage, is she who has never trusted her children in their activities. "Go and see what baby is doing and tell him he mustn't," is still a phrase applying to many homes today.

So that when a mother writes asking me what she should do with children messing things up while she is busy cooking the dinner, I can only reply that perhaps she has brought them up that way. One couple of parents read some of my books and were conscience-struck when they thought of the harm they had done in bringing up their children. They summoned the family to a conference and said: "We have brought you up all wrong. From now on you are free to do what you like." I forget how much they said the breakage bill came to, but I can recall that they

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had to summon a second conference and rescind the previous motion.

"But," cries the troubled mother, "you don't answer my question direct. What shall I do when my boy of nine hammers nails into my grand piano?" The only answer is: "Take the hammer from him and tell him it is your piano and you won't have him damaging what doesn't belong to him."

"And if he doesn't stop hammering?"

"Dear woman, in that case sell your piano and with the proceeds go to some psychologist who will help you to realise how you made your boy a problem. No happy free child will want to damage pianos, unless of course the piano is the only thing in the flat that can be used for hammering nails into. The first step to stop piano damaging is to provide wood and nails, preferably in a room other than the music one. If sonny refuses the wood and wants to nail the piano, then he hates you and is trying to anger you. But maybe the lad has a good ear for music and his nailing is his noisy criticism of your playing ability."

*What shall I tell my child about sex?*

Not much if you have brought him up in self-regulation. Then he will learn by doing as it were. In every case all questions should be answered frankly, but here again, talking is less valuable than acting. I don't mean that you should show the child sexual intercourse, a thing it or no one else has the right to see, for it is private between two lovers; I don't mean you should show him how to masturbate, or touch his sex parts, for this would be a dangerous thing to do. The best sex education is a positive attitude to sex, one of approval. In a good civilisation children would play with their sexual apparatus freely and openly,

without guilt or shame. In our society no child can touch himself openly without being lectured or punished by moral adults, so that in a home in which the parents have a healthy attitude to sex it is not enough to ignore masturbation, treating it as a natural function like blowing a nose. Owing to the outside disapproval the child is to meet sooner or later, the parents ought to show definitely that they are on the child's side in its exploration of its body and its erogenous zones. The child should have parental approval of his natural sex activities, and if he has that, all the later disapproval of the life-haters will have no deep effect.

If your child has to ask much about sex it is a sign that you have brought him up wrongly.

*You say that you have often rewarded a child for stealing. I did that with my boy and it did not cure him. Why?*

Your boy stole because he felt he was unloved at home. Giving a young thief a sixpence reward for stealing means that you are symbolically giving him love, and, when I do it, it often works because I personally am not associated in the child's mind with lack of love. Your boy apparently stole because he thought you did not love him. You gave him a reward to prove that you loved him, but although a symbol of love from me is of value to him, a mere symbol from you does not satisfy him. From you he wants hugging and petting and warmth and approval. Parents should never try psychological tricks with their own children.

*Willie now seven returned from his first term at Summerhill, and his language is so strong that the neighbours won't let him play with their children. What about it?*

Unfortunate, sad, painful for Willie, but what is the alternative? If your neighbours are shocked by a few damns

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and hells and bloodies they are repressed people who ought not to be in touch with your Willie. They are dishonest unconsciously at least, for we are only shocked by the things that interest us deeply. A free person is unshockable. In a few years Willie won't find it interesting to shout swear words all over the place, and he will by that time find a better garden to play in. The danger of the situation is that the poor kid may wonder if the puritan people next door are right or not. He won't wonder in five years; he will know they are wrong.

*Should I teach my child to save by giving her a money-box?*

No. A child cannot see beyond the horizon of today. Later on if she sincerely desires to buy something costing a lot of money she will save without being trained to save. Never try to help a child to advance; it must be left to grow at its own rate. Many parents make dreadful mistakes in trying to force the pace, and it is most depressing to see parents trying to make a child read before it is ready to read. Never help a child if the child can do something alone. A child tries to climb up on a chair; doting parents help it up, thereby spoiling the greatest joy in childhood—conquering a difficulty.

*My boy plays truant from school. What can I do about it?*

I can't very well say: "Shoot the teacher," because that would be a criminal suggestion. My guess is that the school is dull, and your boy active. He is obviously seeking happiness, but no doubt his case is over-determined, with fear as a strong factor in his make-up. Speaking broadly, truancy means that the school is not good enough, and if possible try to send your boy to a school in which there is more freedom, more creation, more love.

*Do you agree with Homer Lane when he said that the dummy or comforter is the first soul-destroyer?*

Lane's argument was that the dummy ties the life interest to the sensuous, that the dummy paralyses the creative impulse and the means of real growth. "It leaves the child without stimulus to wider activity and with no spiritual hunger," and later on Lane says: "Over-sexuality as a social problem we impose on ourselves by our own failures to value the spiritual development of the young child; if we valued this truly and handled it wisely it would be through creative faculty, not gratification, that man's greatest happiness would come in adult years."

Here Lane was showing his New England puritanism; he was comparing creation with gratification, opposing them really. But the two are not opposites in a healthy child or adult. The best creation comes after gratification, or to put it concretely the man who has a satisfying love life is likely to do better work than the neurotic whose sex is wrong. I recall Lane's saying at one of his study circles round about 1918: "Mothers should give their babies red balls to play with," and naturally we all asked why. His answer was: "The colour red is sexual, and the ball will take the baby away from mere sensuous enjoyment of his own body." And I recall a breezy lot of protests from his disciples. But to the question . . . is a dummy good or bad? A friend presented our Zoë with a dummy some months ago. She tested it as a baby tests everything, by putting it to her mouth. It apparently held no interest for her and she threw it away. It may be my Old Scotland puritanism when I say that I think that any baby that wants a dummy has been wrongly reared.

The word *Comforter* is suspicious; a baby does not

need comfort if it has love and warmth and freedom. The function of sucking is to get pleasure, and the drinking is secondary, just as pregnancy is secondary to sex pleasure. The dummy gives sucking pleasure that is second-rate, for the rubber teat has nothing in itself to give, so that we can compare dummy-sucking with masturbation which again is second-rate. As the joy of the sex act with a loved partner is to the poor pleasure of autoeroticism, so is the warmth of mother's breast to the mechanical sucking of the dummy. The fact that dummies are in existence would seem to show that the handling of babies is all wrong. Lane claims that the dummy is bad because it fixes the child at the level of sensuous gratification; I claim that it is bad because it does not afford enough of, nor the right brand of sensuous gratification. However, no man who smokes a pipe or a cigarette should dogmatise about dummies.

*Why do you say so much about the necessity of a child's being happy? Is anybody happy?*

Not an easy question to answer because words confuse. Of course none of us are happy all the time; we have tooth-ache, unfortunate love affairs, boring work. We appreciate the scent of roses all the more when we have walked through the dunghills. If the word happiness means anything it means an inner feeling of well-being, balance, a feeling of being pro-life, of being contented with life. These can only exist when one feels free and unmoulded. Free children have open, fearless faces; disciplined children look cowed, miserable, fearful. Happiness might be defined as the state of having minimal repression, unhappiness the state of neurosis. The happy family live in a love home, the unhappy family in a tense home. I place happiness first because I place free growth first. It is better to be

free and contented and be ignorant of what a decimal fraction is, than to pass School Certificate and have your face covered with acne, a disease the Americans call Chastity Spots. I have never seen acne on the face of a happy and free adolescent.

*My father, a priest, taught me that sex is sinful. Then one day I found out how children were born. It was the result of the sex act. I was a child. I had been born. Therefore my father had done the very thing he told me was so wicked. When I think of that even now I want to get up and storm and rage and rant and swear. Why have you never dealt with this in any of your books?—(Letter from a male parent.)*

I fear I must have been a most credulous, meek child, for when I learned that my father had indulged in the wicked thing sex, the fact that he was married seemed to set my mind at rest. True, I recall saying to a schoolmate who told me about the father's part in pregnancy: "You're a liar; my father and mother wouldn't do such a thing," a saying that must have expressed considerable doubt. In our village there was so deep a gulf between birth in wedlock and birth outside wedlock, that marriage was to all of us a certificate of licence issued via the minister from heaven. But I must have repressed many an ugly doubt, although I have no conscious memory of resentment against my father in that connection. I have a vague memory of thinking hard when, a week after one of my sisters was born, my father, the village dominie, leathered a boy hard for putting his hand up a girl's dress. My friend of the letter query must have been much more conscious than I ever was in childhood . . . or less afraid to put two and two together.

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The question is important in that it makes us think about the whole process of disillusionment in family life. The path of the authoritarian family is paved with children's discoveries that mount up to form a gulf between young and old. The remedy is simple . . . tell no lies, make no pretensions to perfection or goodness or holiness. The remedy is simple, but most parents are too complex to use it. The father who tells his boy that sex is sinful *believes* that it is sinful, and is incapable of telling his son anything else, and if he made a conscious effort to tell his son that sex was not sinful, the son would almost certainly gather from his father's manner of shame and embarrassment that sex was the very devil.

The writer of the letter has his eldest son booked for Summerhill in two years' time. He writes as a postscript: "I am afraid of the damage I can do in these years, and so is my wife." Personally I do not think they will do any damage. His postscript illustrates the hopeful if slow way parental history evolves. His father was a sex-repressed priest; he in his generation sees how wrong his father was, and, because of his upbringing, has some fear that he in his turn will damage his children. His children will in their generation bring up their children without any fears of doing damage. He is an enlightened father. A million fathers are still lying to their children about sex and sin, and to try to calculate how many generations it will take to produce children who will never be disillusioned about their parents would result only in a pessimistic headache.

My prospective parent in a second letter suggests that the idea of a sanctified marriage that makes sex holy and good and proper may be the reason why so many women remain sexually unsatisfied, saying that this is better than the usual explanation that their husbands are ignorant of

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technique. This may be a most important aspect, for matrimony is associated with "normal" sex, not the honest-to-God "wicked" sex of Lady Chatterley and her Lover. Even youths of both sexes who accept the sexual life of their parents would be apt to be shocked if they imagined that father and mother enjoyed all sorts of sex play, play that is relegated to the realm of pornography and obscenity by all those who are afraid to indulge in it. Every method in sex is proper if both parties find delight in it; sex is only abnormal and perverted when it is used in a way that does not afford the highest enjoyment to both parties.

*You call humanity anti-life. What do you mean? We are not anti-life.*—(Question to a Brains Trust of which I was a member.)

In my lifetime I have seen two horrible wars, and I may live to see a much more horrible third one. Many millions of youth died. When I was a boy men died in an imperialist cause in South Africa; from 1914 to 1918 they died in the fight to end all wars for ever; from 1939 to 1945 they died to crush Fascism. Tomorrow many may die to crush or to further Communism. That means that the great masses of people are willing to give up their lives and their children's lives at the command of central authorities for causes that do not touch their individual lives. Chamberlain did not ask the people whether he should go to war on the invasion of Poland. I grant that if he had asked, the great majority would have backed him up. Why? Why fight Hitler when so many had ignored Fascism in Spain or had assisted it? I say because we are anti-life and pro-death if it is clothed in the robes of patriotism, fighting the beast in Germany or anywhere else. Only the beast changes its spots according to the times. In my boyhood the

beast was France. I say we are pawns of the politicians and trade merchants and exploiters, and we are pawns because we were trained to seek life negatively, humbly fitting ourselves into an authoritative society, and ready to die for the ideals of our masters. Only in romance do people die for love; in reality they die for hate.

That is the crowd aspect. The individual is anti-life in his everyday existence. His love-making is in the main unsatisfactory; his pleasures in the main are tawdry, cheap, escapist. He is a moralist, that is one who considers natural living wrong or at the best inadequate, and he trains his children accordingly. No pro-life child would ever be given a conscience about sex or lessons or God or manners or behaviour. No pro-life parent or teacher would strike a child; no pro-life citizen would tolerate our penal code, our hangings, our punishment of homosexuals, our attitude to bastardy, and no pro-life person would sit in a church and claim to be a miserable sinner. One can argue the other way and point to the pro-life of youth when it dances, hikes, plays games, goes to films, concerts, plays. And there is something in the argument too, and that something is this, that youth craves for what is pro-life, and is so brightly alive and optimistic that it finds its pleasure even when it is suppressed from above. This craving persists later, so that man is ambivalent, seeking pleasure and at the same time fearing it. Reich has shown that Freud's Death Instinct is a myth; no animal has an instinct to seek death.

When I use the word anti-life I don't mean death-seeking; I mean fearing life more than death. There are two definite attitudes towards death. One man fears to die because he fears hell or punishment or perhaps extinction. Another fears to die because life is so overwhelmingly interesting that death is a dreaded enemy that will end all inter-

est, or as Wells put it, one is just beginning to master the game when the angel of death comes and says: "Little boy, put your toys away; it is time to go to bed." To be anti-life does not mean to be pro-death; to be anti-life is to be pro-authority, morality, religion, or at least subservient to these. Men did not die in Burma because they wanted to die or because they hated the Japanese or the Germans; they died because they had been taught to obey the powers above them, because they had never had the chance to realise that their whole education and family life predestined them to obedience and blood and sweat and tears. Let me tabulate: pro-life . . . fun and games, love, interesting work or hobbies, laughter, music, dance. Anti-life . . . duty, obedience, profit, power, religion, soldiering. In history anti-life has won, and will continue to win so long as youth is trained to fit into adult conceptions of life.

*My husband and his sisters tell me that I am pornographic because I answer the children's questions about sex. What exactly does pornography mean?*

This is not an easy question to answer. I should define pornography as an obscene attitude to sex and natural functions, a guilty attitude similar to that of repressed schoolboys who leer and snigger in dark corners and write up sex words on walls. Most sex stories are pornographic, and often the teller rationalises when he says that it isn't the smut that makes it a good story, but the wit or humour. Like most men I have told and listened to a thousand sex stories, but looking back now I can think of only one or two that I would consider worth telling again. It would be too sweeping to say that every sex story is the result of repression, for that would suggest that all humour is so; I

roared when I saw Charlie Chaplin in a bathing suit dive into two inches of water, but I have no repressions about diving. Humour exists in any ludicrous situation whether it be sexual or non-sexual. I think there is a smile in the tale of a Scots ploughman who said, when having intimate relations with the farm servant maid: "For Christ's sake, Jean Broon, spit oot tha jujubes and tak some interest in what's going on." But I am willing to agree that a person brought up without any sex repressions in youth might find that story pornographic. Which means that in our present society none of us are free to draw a firm line between what is pornographic and what is not. It is also a question of age; many a so-called "commercial traveller" story appealed to me when I was a student, whereas today I think that ninety-nine per cent of them are simply crudely obscene. So that the woman's question makes me think that the pornography lies in the attitude of the husband and his sisters.

By and large pornography is simply sex plus guilt, and the music-hall audiences that cackle at comedians who don't keep the show "clean" are composed of people who have been given a sick attitude to sex. Again however I do not want to pose as a righteous person above all music-hall fun and games. I wonder if a country like Russia, which has abolished prostitution, would laugh as a London audience laughed when a comedian came on the stage coughing, and said: "Excuse me, I have a very bad cold . . . that's the worst of getting up out of a warm bed and going home."

I do feel self-righteous when I say that no adult should ever be pornographic with children. I don't think that Freud was right when he said that the sex story was intended to arouse the sex of the listener, for if that were

so, most clubs would be full of homosexuals. When adults tell sex stories to children they are themselves at the leering, smutty stage of development. If all children were free and oriented about sex the adult obscenity would cut no ice, but as millions of children are today, ignorant and guilty about sex, the pornographic adult is adding to their ignorance and guilt. Usually the raconteur of sex stories is he or she who does not have a satisfactory sex life. Reich, the man who has been hounded from one country after another because of his passionate advocacy of youth's freedom to love, never told a sex story in his life.

*A question I get scores of times is this one. . . . In dealing with my children I find myself handicapped by my ignorance of child psychology. Can you recommend a few books on the subject?*

In my reply I mention Homer Lane's *Talks to Parents and Teachers* (now reprinted) and then I lay down my pen and begin to try to think of others. If the mother sounds intelligent I tell her to read the works of various Freudians on child psychology; if I have some doubt about the attitude of the mother I do not mention these books, fearing lest their terminology and case histories confuse. A mother does not want to know about incest complexes or anal-erotic traits; what she wants to know is what to do if baby screams at night or if Mary wets the bed when she is twelve. Stekel's *A Primer for Mothers* has much non-technical sense in it; especially is he full of sane advice about the dangers of prohibiting masturbation at all ages. I disagree with him when he writes: "Pay no attention to the child at night, regardless of how he screams, unless he is wet and his diapers need to be changed." I feel that Stekel over-emphasises the struggle for power that every child

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indulges in. The danger of any book is that the reader will accept it wholly (or of course reject it *in toto*). Any observant mother knows when a night scream is a power one, and she reacts accordingly.

The best book on babies I have come across recently is an American one, *The Pocket Book of Baby & Child Care*, by Benjamin Spock, M.D. Although I have seen other books of the Pocket Book series in Britain, I have not so far seen this one on sale here. It is published by Pocket Books, Inc., Rockefeller Center, New York. It is nearer to self-regulation than any book I have seen.

I always hesitate to recommend books about older children, because reading about delinquency, anti-social behaviour, stealing etc. seldom gets one anywhere . . . and here I am writing a book that deals, in part, with older children's problems. It is best for troubled parents of older children to go back and read books about infancy, for then they may be able to see the wrong tactics that, in their own families, led to bad results, and if they are to have more children, they can decide not to make the same mistakes.

Reich was the first to champion the right of all children to have genital play, autoerotic and heterosexual, and his book *The Sexual Revolution* should be read by parents and educators. His other books can be had from The Orgone Institute Press, New York City. They are *The Function of the Orgasm*, *The Cancer Biopathy*, *Character Analysis*, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, and latest of all, *Listen, Little Man*, a bold, shattering book. I pride myself on having the ability to know a good man when I meet one.

When I met Homer Lane in 1916 I recognised in him a practical genius, and when I met Wilhelm Reich in Oslo in 1937 I realised that he was the most brilliant psychologist since Freud. Today, when he has gone on from

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psychology to bio-physics, far beyond my ability to grasp completely his work, for I am no scientist, I am convinced that his message is much more important than that of any living thinker and doer known to me. I had intended to end this book with a chapter on his work on Bions and Orgones, but I have decided not to try, for my lay knowledge, or lack of it rather, could not do justice to the theme; besides I think it bad to write about another man's work, for he can describe it so much better himself. If anyone wrote a book called *Neill and His Work*, I should tremble with fear, and read it with trepidation.

*One warning about reading Reich. You either accept him or reject him, for you can't half-believe in Reich.* Someone once paid me this compliment . . . He writes to your guts, not your head. The compliment would fit Reich much more neatly, as you will see if you read him.

### *Is marriage necessary?*

Yes, but not marriage as it is today. Man is not by nature polygamous; the eastern harem is not a universal phenomenon. What is natural is to love, and as love is not eternal, free humans would love again and again. In practice this is what many humans do, and the result is the misery of divorce courts, clandestine, guilty affairs, or, when repression prohibits active extra-marital love, the wretchedness of homes full of hate and frustration. The unneurotic man would love but one partner at a time, and loving, would be immune from other attractions. There can never be any way of preventing heartbreak, for it seldom happens that partners tire of each other at the same time. Many sensitive people remain with partners that they have ceased to love, fearing to hurt, but the net result is misery for both partners. The hurt one keeps hoping that the other will love

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again, a vain hope, for in love one never goes back; in love the spark can never be rekindled. Maybe that is the rule of all life, for we take up a hobby—photography, metalwork, what not, and when we have lived it out we do not go back to it, or if we try we find it impossible to reawaken the old interest. Hence I say that tomorrow a healthy humanity will love and love again.

The most awkward question is the one about the children. What is to happen to them? It is easier to answer the question: what happens to them today? Loveless and hateful homes produce nearly all our problem children and delinquents. Some of the problems improve when the parents separate, and that suggests that, when love is free, children will never have to live in a loveless home. I grant that the question is complicated because of the possessive attitude adults have to children. If little Ruth aged—say—nine goes to live with her mother in a new home with a new father, she will be unlikely to be loved by the new father, yet I am not sure that the possessive “thou art mine” attitude to children is a natural one, and I have had many years of giving a crowd of children love without having any feeling of possession about them. So far I have no feeling of possession about my infant daughter, and if she had to go and live with someone else my chief worry would be that she might not be allowed the self-regulatory life that she is having now . . . which may signify a possessive attitude to be sure, although I should hate the idea of any other small child’s going to an atmosphere I didn’t believe in.

Indeed I have often kept a child free of fees just to keep it from going to an unfree school. I cannot, however, visualise society where love is free from marriage chains. It will no doubt have a new economic system, so that couples will be able to separate without having to consider the

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money aspect as so many have to do now. Few men today can afford to live with a new wife and give alimony to a former wife and her children, and the mere fact that I take the man as an illustration shows that in a patriarchal society it is the man who earns and spends the money. It looks, then, as if the solution of the marriage and children question lies in the rejection of a purely patriarchal system, one in which the man owns the wife, the children, the source of income. Economic freedom for women will accompany love freedom. Mrs. Smith will not be compelled to go on living with Mr. Smith for the reason that she cannot live without his monetary support. And of course the "guilty party" absurdity will disappear from the law, for there will be no guilty party involved. There are thousands of poor women today who, refused divorce by their husbands, fear to leave them, knowing that their adultery would mean the loss of their children. It is a sad reflection that women, who form the majority in Britain, are so conditioned by their patriarchal education, that they tolerate the legal linking of love with guilt. It is true that a man can be the "guilty party" and lose the children, but in most cases the children mean more to the woman than to the man, for the mother loves her child much earlier than does the father, and while a mother loves her child without self interest, many a father begins to love only when the infant begins to flatter his ego by taking notice of him. It is for a similar reason that a man likes his dog.

When divorced parents remain on friendly terms it is good that the children see both parents in vacations from school. If, however, the parents cannot be friendly with each other it is better that the children see only the one parent, otherwise they will hear words or see expressions that give them a conflict between father and mother.

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*Why don't you join the Communist Party? We'd put you on an education committee straight away.—(From a C.P. organiser.)*

"At the first meeting," I said, "I'd bring in the C.P. manifesto on education, issued during the war, and say that, although excellent about external things . . . size of classes, apparatus, etc., it did not touch the fundaments of education; it did not once mention the child and his nature. What," I asked, "would happen then?"

"We'd discuss what you said, and then vote on a policy," he said.

I smiled and said: "I think I'd be outvoted."

He also smiled when he replied: "Very likely."

"What then?" I asked. "Could I write a book or give a lecture giving my point of view?"

"No," he said, "you'd have to support the majority decision."

So I didn't join the C.P., or for that matter, any other political organisation. My work and interest lie outwith the boundaries of all political parties. Their interest is mainly one of solving the economic problem, while mine is one of solving the psychological problem. Fundamentally I believe in a society in which there will be no class exploiting another, for only in such a society will the mass of children have the chance to develop in freedom. And looking at humanity psychologically today, I find in the have-nots the same hatred of life that I find among the haves. Fascist Spain kills have-nots who are against the regime; Communists in Central Europe hang enemies of the State. On both sides the class war is a real war of hatred and intolerance. And it is not surprising; the haves have always hated the have-nots so much that they looked upon them as an infe-

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rior race, not fit to sit beside in trains, restaurants, theatres, not qualified to converse with. The hate was not violent nor usually conscious; only when the power of the have-nots challenged that of the haves did violent hatred show itself. At a venture I suggest that the socialistic gradualness of—say—the present British Labour Government will fail because it does not afford sufficient outlet for hate. A titled friend once said to me: "I'm a socialist, not because I love the poor, but because I hate the rich." The political future of humanity is to be settled by passion and not by reasoning, and, indeed, the supporters of hate have a case when they say that, had Russia waited in a Christ-like spirit for the haves to render up their wealth and power she would still be an illiterate serf nation. It is because I realise that the future will be solved by passion that I become pessimistic. Individuals can show compassion but political movements cannot.

*I am manager of a big business. My son of fourteen is lazy at school and in vacations loaf about the house with no apparent interest. Nothing I can do seems to affect him. Can you advise?*

Yes, stop trying to affect him. There is no such thing as laziness; the word is used instead of "lack of interest." Because you are a busy, energetic business man, you think that your son is wasting his time. I waste my time only when I have to listen to boring conversation or when I travel on ships or trains. Lots of boys who sat at the bottom of the class became famous men, and in my school I have often seen boys and girls loaf for years and then go out with energy to a pleasing job. Loafing is often like convalescence, a slow recovery, but mostly it means that the child has not found a special interest, and our spoon-fed school-

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ing does not tend to giving children a special interest. The more you try to influence the boy the less chance is there of his finding an interest, especially if you are an authoritative father. My school allows each child to go to lessons or stay away; no teacher ever suggests that a child should attend lessons. Of late, since the war, some parents have been urging their children to attend lessons, and the result is disastrous. If they attend they cannot learn easily, and if they stay away they have a bad conscience. Either way the outcome is bad. The children feel vaguely that they are being swindled . . . school says attend or don't attend as you will; home says attend; the result being that the child is no longer free to follow its own inclination and interest. Every pupil in my school whose parents urged it to pass Matric failed to pass Matric; everyone who passed did so off his or her own bat.

But I take it your son is not at a free school. You cannot do a thing about it because most probably his laziness is connected with your training. You may have tried too hard to impress him with your own ability to work hard. If you have taken a moral attitude to his sex his apparent laziness may simply be the outward sign of a guilty conflict inside. He may have many inner conflicts about his home, but really, how can I advise? For all I know you may be living in hate with your wife; you may have an outside love affair; your wife may have tied the boy to inertia and safety.

The question is one that goes far beyond the boundary of the home. In a thousand school staff rooms teachers discuss why Jim is bad at maths, why Liz fidgets in class, why Tom is stupid in every subject. Solutions like putting Tom down in Class III or giving Liz more handwork are always inadequate. On the staff of every school should be a psychologist who should rank in importance above all other

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members of the staff. He or she should spend the day discovering things that lie too deep for superficial notice, and half the time should be spent talking to the parents. Unfortunately the term psychologist too often means one who thinks in terms of intelligence tests, and they told me that this is especially so in America. My opinion of intelligence tests is possibly vitiated by the fact that when one is given in my school some of the older pupils beat me. I consider that they have a very limited utility, because they cannot test emotional factors, and it is the emotional factor that makes Bobby "lazy" or Mary "fidgety." And it is always the result of emotional unbalance when a child at home is a loafer or hateful or destructive.

I recall after the First World War giving the U.S.A. Army Intelligence Tests to a youth who had been certified insane. He passed almost a hundred per cent and in theory he ought to have been Commander-in-Chief of the American Army. The real reason why the Intelligence Test is popular is that it is absolutely safe; it does not probe into sleeping emotions, emotions that society fears to let loose. It may tell us who our future professors and teachers and doctors will be; it cannot tell us who are going to be our Picassos and Charlie Chaplins and Bernard Shaws. It tests thinking but not creation, memory but not originality; it is the true product of a mechanistic age. An offshoot from the Intelligence Test is the B.B.C. Quiz. Millions listen to questions and answers that are infantile when they are not just silly. . . . What is the colour of a sevenpenny stamp? Which star starred in *My Sweetie Went Away*? These feeble quizzes have a powerful effect on children. In my own school I find it necessary to counteract the tendency by giving quizzes that require some originality or imagination. I take it that it is better to ask juniors why one is asked not

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to use the lavatory while a train is standing in a station, than to ask who scored against Arsenal in the Cup Final; to ask why Glasgow is situated where it is, than to ask what India exports.

During the war I spoke to too many G.I.s who knew how many tons of steel were in the Brooklyn Bridge, but who were ignorant of ideas on deeper subjects, and can only conjecture that the value attached in U.S.A. to encyclopaedic knowledge and intelligence tests explains the phenomenon. But, judging by the B.B.C. enthusiasm for encyclopaedic knowledge we are catching up on the United States. Perhaps before long it will be necessary to know the names of the Australian cricket team before one can get a job as salesman in a store.

All this in answer to a question about a lazy boy! It has just struck me why I can never stick to the point. The reason is that there is no point in life, no aim in life . . . immediate aims, yes, like my aim to improve my golf or your aim to become a good pianist, but there is no great central aim in life as the religionists claim. My tom cat Jeep has only function in his life; he eats and sleeps and at times goes out after his harem; he just lives with no ultimate aim whatever. Man, who could be as harmless and full of life as a cat, postulates aims in life, and in doing so proves that he is "higher" than the cat. He aims at eternal life beyond the grave, fame, wealth, power; he furthers his aim by inventing mechanical gadgets that heat the house and kill other men and enable him to travel and speak at a distance. He aims at truth, moral perfection; he aims to overcome what he calls animal sex. But he never reaches the contentment and balance of a cat. What he does reach is discontent and unhappiness and self-hate, so that his wonderful mechanical inventions at once make life more agreeable (re-

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frigerators, radio, automobiles, airplanes) and also more dangerous, for most of his peaceful gadgets have a use in war.

Atomic energy may become universal for power purposes or it may destroy the world. I have not heard of many religionists who protested vehemently against the agonising death of thousands of innocent Jap families in Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Why? If the church's aim is universal love here and hereafter and the army aim is universal pain and destruction, how comes it that, so far as protest is concerned, their aims appear to agree? The logical answer would seem to be that all life aims are the same life aim, that is something unnatural, something accepting life as being not good enough and therefore needing improvement, which, of course, is the meaning of child training and uplift and religion. Man's curse is that he makes an aim and in trying to reach it sacrifices all that is best in his nature. It is our small immediate aims that make up our lives. Children left to themselves have a hundred aims a day, but they are aims connected with material not with improving their own minds, or the minds of any other people. The aim to make a boat, to score a goal, to tackle a stiff rider in Geometry are healthy and natural and full of interest; the aim to tell people how to live and how to die is unhealthy, vicious, dangerous. Education's problem is, or should be, to distinguish between aims that give joy and a sense of achievement, and aims that mar character by trying to uplift it. That is all that Summerhill attempts to do, to afford an atmosphere in which the immediate aim is the important one. It has produced brilliant scientists and engineers and mathematicians and doctors and actors, all aiming at perfection in their respective spheres, but not one of them will ever be likely to seek an aim in mysticism,

religion, moralising, character moulding. To sum up, life has no aim in animals; in humans life has an aim made by man's ability to think and do . . . but the function comes first. My baby is walking now, but with no aim; she walks because she has found that feet are for moving, and only later will the aim appear; then she will see something on a table and her aim will be to walk to the table. Purpose follows function. Baby moves a hand at first with no purpose, and later uses the hand with a purpose. If life stopped there the world would not be neurotic, and that is possibly the reason why one finds more neurosis among middle-class intellectuals than among carpenters and ploughmen, men whose aim is immediate and limited . . . to make a good table, to plough a straight furrow. It is when the abstract, far off purpose comes in that we get a sick society, and that brings me back to the contention that the abstract, moral aim in life is used deliberately to make man feel himself inferior, sinful, obedient in an authoritative society. Yet that does not explain why man seeks power over others, seeks to tell others how to live. It is clear that when man possesses land and property and the power over labour he wants to preserve his power by using a system of morality that makes the underdog feel inferior and impotent, but that only raises the question: why does he attach so much importance to power and wealth and security? I am no thinker, no philosopher; I do hard work with children, doing mostly the right thing without thinking out the reason behind my action, working by intuition . . . whatever that may mean.

I haven't got the brilliant mind of a Freud or a Reich, but feeling that work with a small group of children is of limited use to humanity, I have to try to explain in words, actions and methods that are most difficult to explain. In

short, I have done much work and now at sixty-four I want to try to find out what basic principles lie behind that work. Hence when I ask the question: why does man seek power and security and wealth, I am thinking aloud, trying to grapple with a problem that, so far as I know, has never been solved. My cat Jeep seeks security in my room, warmth at my fire, but he does not make a system of morals that will prevent other cats from having warmth and security. Then why does man? I wonder if the explanation lies in man's insignificance, for the best and the greatest of us are maggots in the gigantic universe, pygmies, dwarfs; when the best of us die life goes on without missing us for more than a day. We all know we shall die and the marvellous thing is that most of us seldom think of death. Unconsciously, however, we must feel that our lives are all too short, and this is the basis of belief in immortality, which means eternal happiness and security. The desire for wealth and security in this life may spring from the same unconscious realisation that life is too short; laying up your treasure in heaven is all very well for tomorrow, but what about today? I want my heaven now, says man; I want heaven on earth . . . but for me, not the other fellow, just as my scheme for personal immortality is for me alone, for at the Golden Gate I shall have to stand on my own feet. This would explain why the church always supports those in power, why the Church Spiritual is still the Church Temporal in essence. So perhaps the chief difference between a cat and a man is that the man knows that life is short and the cat does not; his treasure is very much on earth. But for all I know this may have been said before and annihilated by a broadside of philosophers. If there is anything in the idea the conclusion is that the growing disbelief in eternal life will ultimately destroy the authoritative society.

## Speaking Personally

A FRIEND who read the manuscript of this book said: "You will put a lot of people off; you write in such a superior way, and have a too strong 'I'm tellin' you' attitude. You see, the reader can only judge you by your writing; he doesn't know you in person—an easy-going man with no personal enemies. Can't you do something about it? Can't you show that you are just as weakly human as all the rest of us?"

The answer is that I should have to write an autobiography as an appendix to the book, and that would demand an interest in me and not in my work. Yet I am troubled about the suggestion that I claim to be a superior person. How can I disprove it? Today (in school vacation) I have mixed cement for a doorstep, wheeled a dozen barrow-loads of gravel to mend a path, played with the baby, done half a *Times* crossword, made shelves for a cupboard, and now in the evening write these words. I smoke and like a whisky if I can get one; I swear but seldom; my love life is

good and happy, and I live on friendly terms with all my neighbours. I am fond of dancing, and I like to think that I dance well. I seldom if ever get angry and certainly never with a child. I play golf in an atrocious manner. I like good cinema pictures, but seldom go to a theatre, because I have so often been disappointed with plays. I am an Honours Graduate in English Language and Literature, but nearly all that I learned has gone, and my opinion on Chaucer or Spenser or Congreve is not worth considering. I seldom read a book nowadays, and prefer to potter in my workshop.

In short I am an ordinary guy who finds life full of interest and good fellowship. Quite a few Americans last summer congratulated me on having my feet on the ground, saying that they had expected to meet a crank with long hair and sandals and a superior aversion to drinks and smokes and funny stories and all the foibles of life.

It is my work that is important, not my personality. I disclaim any originality in thought. Indeed, if I have any merit it is that I have a flair for spotting the people who matter. I learned a tremendous lot from Homer Lane, and, incidentally, point out that I have always acknowledged my debt to him, for I think it ignoble to steal a man's ideas without acknowledging where they came from. I discovered Wilhelm Stekel round about 1923 and our friendship lasted till his death. Opinions differ about him and his analytical technique. I found him a brilliant symbolist with a remarkable intuition, but since his work was curative, and I was gradually drifting away from the therapy side of psychology, I transferred my interest to a later discovery, Wilhelm Reich, who, while doing therapy in a new way, was tackling the much greater question of the analysis of society. If, as I said, opinions differed about Stekel, they

differed much more violently about Reich. I met Reich in 1935 and since then have been convinced that his is by far the most vital message since that of Freud. I do not pretend to understand his scientific work with Bions and Orgones. I do understand his thesis that the sickness of humanity is primarily due to sex repression, and I freely acknowledge that this book has been greatly conditioned by my belief in Reich, not that I am interpreting him; there may be much in the book that he would disagree with and disown as his ideas. I ran my school for over twenty years before I met Reich, and ran it in the same way as I do now. Reich, however, made me conscious of things that I had done by intuition. In Maine, summer of 1947 I could not grasp his argument that function comes before purpose, until he exclaimed: "But, Neill, your life work has been founded on the principle that function comes first. You don't have Summerhill *in order that* children should study or learn to work or become 'ists' of any kind. You let them function in their own play-work fashion, and you postulate no purpose for them at all."

I think that of all the people who have had an influence on my work, Lane and Reich stand out most prominently. It is impossible, however, to say what influences condition the life of any man; we gather a million ideas and attitudes, which mostly become unconscious, and may suddenly appear as a new idea or principle after the unconscious has digested them and strung them together. In the early days I read Edmond Holmes' *What Is and What Might Be*, Caldwell Cook's *Playway*, Norman MacMunn's *Path to Freedom in the School*. I fancy that they did not influence me much; they were too much confined to the school, to methods of teaching, and, for the same reason Montessori left me cold. When I went to open a school in Germany in

1921 I met the pioneer teachers there, and found nothing in their attitude to inspire me. They were mostly believers in character-moulding, not by discipline, but by example, so that they did not smoke, drink, dance foxtrots, go to Kinos, in case the children should follow their bad examples. Their pupils later fitted into Hitler's regime, or at least many of them did, for wasn't Adolf a teetotaller and non-smoker and moral about sex?

American educationists had no effect on me because I did not study them. I should blush to say that I never read the works of John Dewey, but then I have never read Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and have to smile when an occasional reviewer calls me a disciple of Rousseau or Pestalozzi. No, I found my inspirations outside the teaching fraternity, in Freud, Reich, Lane, Wells, Shaw, and, of course, Christ, with difficulty I admit, owing to my early "religious" training which made him a god instead of a most human human. I find most educational papers dull, and a daydream is one of running an educational journal that will eschew all mention of classes, salaries, pensions, inspectors, school subjects, that will be full of humour and brightness.

This humour business deserves to be discussed. There is far too little humour in our schools and certainly in our educational journals. I know that humour can have its dangers, that some men use humour to cover up more serious matters in life, for it is so easy to laugh something off instead of facing it. Children do not use humour for that purpose. To them humour and fun mean friendliness, mateyness, and stern teachers realise this and banish humour from their schools . . . but the question arises: Can a stern teacher have a sense of humour at all? I doubt it. I find in my own daily work that I use humour all day long;

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I joke with each and every child, but they all know that when occasion arises I am deadly serious with them. I should call it fun rather than humour, for a child has a sense of fun before humour develops. I say to a new boy of six: "Run over to the Sand and tell Neill to come." He grins and says: "You are Neill," but in six months if I say to him: "David, go to the Cottage and tell David that I want to see him," he laughs and says "O.K." One David went to the Cottage and returned saying: "David says he doesn't want to see you." In dealing with children humour must never have any bite in it as so much wit has. One must never hurt a child. I once made the mistake of telling a new boy of nine that he was fined his pocket money for stealing the front door. He wept and protested that he hadn't stolen it.

I find that telling children a story about their own adventures is an excellent way of bringing humour into their lives. When I told them the tale of *The Last Man Alive* (now out of print) the group saw most of the jokes but younger children fail to see the most obvious puns or jokes. When recently I told our youngest group about their private zoo in the hockey field, I said, "The lions were hungry and Neill told Billy to go to the shop and buy some food. He came back with two Lyon's ice-creams." Not one saw the pun.

I began this chapter intending to speak personally, and here I go drifting back to children, an unconscious act illustrating my argument that my personality is not the important thing. Nor is the personality of the parents the important thing in the home. Not that they should take a back seat and sacrifice themselves for the new generation, rather should they join the new generation and renew their youth. Barrie said: "Genius is the power of being a boy again at

will," a half or quarter truth to be sure, but in the home happiness depends much on the parental ability to be a child again at will. The worst parents are those who have forgotten their childhood, forgotten how to play and how to phantasy. To be a Peter Pan is to remain an infantile neurotic, fearing life; to be a Peter Pan in play is a sign of healthy sanity. When a man has lost the ability to play he should die physically, for he is dead psychically, and a danger to any child who comes in contact with him.

It may be that, reading this book, a father or mother may exclaim: "Now where do I go from here? Have I learned anything about the hundred and one difficulties that arise in bringing up a family?" It was not my intention to write a *Family Doctor at Home*, tabulating all the psychological diseases alphabetically, giving symptoms and then treatment. My motive is prophylactic, and the treatment is the same for every psychological disease, namely this: keep your own personality outside the child's personality; keep doing as much self-examination as you can, so that when you feel inclined to spank your child, just pause and ask yourself a few questions. I can think of a score of likely questions. Am I angry with my child because I had a row with my husband (or wife) this morning? Because our intercourse last night did not give me enough pleasure? Because the woman next door says I spoil my brat? Because my marriage is a failure? Because the boss ticked me off in the office? It can help much to ask oneself such questions. The deeper questions, the constellated ones, alas, are beyond consciousness. It is very unlikely that an irate father will pause and ask himself this complicated question . . . Am I angry with my son for swearing because I was brought up strictly with cane and moral lecture, with fear of God, with respect for social convention,

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with intense sex repression, brought up to live up to Stanley Baldwin's motto of Safety First? The answer would mean a degree of self-analysis that is beyond the capability of most of us. Sad, for that answer would save many a child from neurosis and unhappiness. The Biblical phrase about visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children has been understood in its physical context for generations, and even the uneducated can learn the moral of Ibsen's *Ghosts*, where the son is ruined because of the syphilis of the father. What is not yet understood is the much more frequent ruination of the children by the psychological sins of the fathers, and if this book has helped even one parent to realise the tremendous influence for good or evil a parent has, it will not have been written in vain.



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